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AND

LONGFORD AND MEATH REPORTER.

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# Ancient & Modern Sketches of Westmeath.

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## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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From *Commercial Ireland*.

“BY one of those happy chances which occur sometimes to break the monotony of our work-a-day life, I came across the other day a painter from Ballymore who can handle a pen as well as the brush. His name is James Woods—plain James Woods—for so decent an Irishman has no necessity for the prefix of Mr.—and he handed me a *brochure*, entitled, ‘Ancient and Modern Sketches of the County Westmeath.’ This unpretentious toiler having good taste from nature, made the time himself to give his countrymen as interesting a little book as has been for years my lot to read. It is simply crammed through every one of its seventy-six pages with interesting topographical history and reminiscences, and I cannot fancy any Westmeath man who will be without spending a silver shilling on it. As I purpose in subsequent issues to give more than one quotation from it, I can only here state that it abounds in folk lore, and treats of subjects that most of us have no time to discover for our-

selves. Mr. Woods—I called him Mr. that time by mistake—what an appropriate name for a painter and a lover of nature—has the good fortune to live far from the madding crowd, in a remote region that favours reflection, and invites the mind to wander down the corridor of the past. And this working author has done so to good purpose; he has disintegrated old literary jewels, cleared away the cobwebs of neglect from neglected but historic tombs, and lit with his unpretentious but searching lamp, hidden corners in the lives of eminent ones long passed away. I feel that I owe a debt of gratitude to James Woods for giving me so great a treat as this book, for bringing me back to the placid loughs, the still more placid graveyards, the breezy plains, and the ivied ruins of Westmeath, and all the tender and beautiful reminiscences that haunt it. And any of my readers who purchase his book will feel as grateful as I do.”

From *United Ireland*.

“AN unassuming but indefatigable worker in the field of historic literature. Mr. James Woods presents us with an extremely pleasant and gossipy volume under the title, ‘Ancient and Modern Sketches of the County Westmeath.’ The locality is one rich in antiquarian interest. Scholar, saint, and soldier alike will find in its history a mine of archæo-

logical wealth. In Celtic legend as well as mediæval romance it abounds with fascinating lore; and Mr. Woods has in the limits at his disposal opened up much of the long-hidden treasures. The book, which is published by Messrs. Alley & Co., of Ryder’s Row, Dublin, is presented to the public at the moderate sum of one shilling.”

## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS—*Continued.*

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From the *Irish Catholic*.

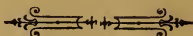
"WE have been favoured with an early copy of 'Ancient and Modern Sketches of the County Westmeath,' by James Woods, and published by Messrs. Alley & Co., Ryder's Row. We cannot help most heartily commending Mr. Woods' little work, which reflects much credit on his industry and patriotism. He has done much for the local history of Westmeath, collected a large amount of valuable information, and compiled a volume which contains in nearly every page some item to interest and amuse the reader. It rather adds to than lessens our appreciation of Mr. Woods' sketches to know that they have been done in the scanty leisure hours of a working man, a house painter. We trust that they will have the large sale which their own merit as well as the low price, only one shilling, at which they are issued, should secure them."

From the *Westmeath Examiner*.

"THE pleasant and entertaining little work under notice is the product of the labour and the love of Mr. Woods. With a purpose as patriotic as it is praiseworthy, Mr. Woods set himself to work up the history, the traditions, and the stories of the county which gave him birth. In the midst of a toiling life he has managed to make time to bring to our minds those pleasing and fanciful legends which we have heard in years gone by, and he again peoples our raths and mounds with the fanciful figures of those 'good people' around whom such a centre of interest is woven for the people of this country, who are peculiarly devoted to the reminiscences and legends of the past. Mr. Woods' book is replete with interest for every Westmeath man."

From the *Westmeath Independent*.

"IN the volume that has now been published there are seventy-five historical, traditional, and legendary sketches, principally relating to Kilkenney West, Mucknagh, 'Sweet Auburn,' Drumraney, Tang, Shrule, Ballymahon, Ballymore, Ballynacargy, &c., &c., also the historical associations connected with the islands on Lough Ree. The work is an example of wonderful skill in compilation, and of the graphic descriptive powers possessed by the author, who is a working man."



# Ancient and Modern Sketches

OF THE

## COUNTY WESTMEATH:

HISTORICAL, TRADITIONAL, AND LEGENDARY.

BY

JAMES WOODS.

For they keep a record of those, the true-hearted,  
Who fell with the cause they had vowed to maintain;  
They show us bright shadows of glory departed,  
Of love that grew cold, and the hope that was vain.

FRANCES BROWNE.

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17 Apr 28

THE favourable reception accorded to the first volume of *Ancient and Modern Sketches of Westmeath*, and the flattering opinions of the press, far beyond my humble expectation, and encouraged by my many kind friends with the promise of their support and patronage, I have undertaken the publication of the second volume. It is a hopeful sign of the times that our people are beginning to take an interest in the neglected historic records of our county, and evincing a laudable desire of becoming acquainted with the tales of its ancient glories and picturesque scenery, second to none in Ireland. True, there are many who in their pursuit of novelty are apathetic to the pictorial beauties of their own country and its history, in preference of foreign climes. Those belong to the class rebuked by the Roman historian Pliny in his memorable censure. We have been surfeited with pictures of other lands, limned as vividly with the pen as with the pencil, and novel writers favour us with glowing descriptions of continental lakes and mountains; but yet, nowhere can nature be contemplated in grander or lovelier aspects than in fair Westmeath. Yes, our county is rich in places hallowed by memorials of ancient nationality, to which they may well delight to make reverent pilgrimage. The ruined ruins of Rathconnell, Lynn, Kenny, Royal Usneach, and magnificent old Fore, where St. Feckin prayed and taught, is inseparably associated with the memory of a glorious past, and is a prolific source of poetry and romance; they are identified with an era when the chivalry and social history of the Island of Saints were preserved in the literature of her bards. Diversified and magnificent as is the scenery of other parts of Ireland, there is scarcely any county of similar extent better worthy the attention of the artist, tourist, or antiquarian. I would consider myself an ingrate of the deepest dye were I not to return my sincere and grateful thanks to the following gentlemen who supplied me with materials to compile this and subsequent volumes, viz.: Mr. N. J. Downes, Solicitor; Dr. Kerrigan, County Coroner; Major Kelly, Glencarra; Mr. A. J. Banon, J.P.; and Mr. Eugene O'Beirne, Corealy, Rathowen.

JAMES WOODS.

Ballymore.


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# Ancient and Modern Sketches OF THE COUNTY WESTMEATH.

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## MULLINGAR AND ITS ENVIRONS.

ESTMEATH is bounded on the east by the County of Meath; on the west by Counties of Longford and Roscommon; and on the south by King's County; and contains, according to the Ordnance Survey, 386,254 statute acres, of which 313,935 are cultivated land. South from Athlone to the boundary point south-east of Clonmellon, is  $43\frac{1}{2}$  statute miles; breadth, from Finnea to Kinnegad, 26 miles; and from the River Lany, near Ballinacargy, to the boundary near Rahugh, 21 miles. The population in 1821 amounted to 128,819, and in 1831 to 136,872, and in 1881 to 171,798.

This county formed part of the kingdom of Meath, when the island was divided into five provincial dynasties, and was then known by the name of Eircamhoin, or the Western Division. Its provincial assemblies were held at the Hill of Usneagh, supposed by some to be the Laberus noticed by Ptolemy as one of the inland cities of Ireland. In 1153, the northern part of the county became the scene of contention between the two sons of Dermot O'Brien, who terminated their strife by a bloody battle fought near Fore, in which Turlough, having obtained the victory, became master of his brother's person, and put out his eyes!

The principal Irish families during this period were those of MacGeoghegan (chieftains of Moycashel), O'Mullrenan (or Brennan), O'Coffey, O'Mullady, O'Malone, O'Daly, O'Higgins, MacGawly, MacGan, O'Shannagh (afterwards changed to Fox), O'Finlan, and O'Cuishin. The annals of the religious houses prove that Westmeath suffered much during the period in which the island was exposed to the predatory incursions of the Danes, the town and abbey of Fore alone having been burnt nine times in the 10th and 11th centuries either by the Danes or by the bordering Irish chieftains.

After the settlement of the English in Leinster, the county formed part of the palatinate of Hugh de Lacey, who allotted it in large tracts to his principal followers, the most remarkable of whom were Petit, Tuite, Hussey, D'Alton, Delamere, Dillon, Nugent, Hope, Ware, Ledwich, D'Ardis, Gaynor, and Constantine. Subsequently, the families of D'Arcy, Jones, Tyrrell,

Fitzgerald, and Piers, settled here at various periods previous to the Reformation.

It is related that Mortimer, Earl of March, who married Phillippa, daughter and heiress of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward III., finding it necessary to conceal himself during the troubles that followed the deposition of Richard II., chose this county as his place of refuge, where he remained a long time in concealment.

In 1468, Delamere, Abbot of Tristernagh, was attainted by Act of Parliament for uniting with the Irish enemies and English rebels in an insurrection in which the town of Delvin was burned. By an Act of the 34th of Henry VIII., the ancient palatinate of Meath was divided, the eastern portion retaining its former name, and the western being distinguished by its present appellation. Longford was a part of the latter division until it was formed into a distinct county by Elizabeth.

Piers, in his "History of Westmeath," asserts that the rising in 1641 was concocted in the Abbey of Multyfarnham, but he supplies no proof—it is a mere conjecture. So great was the change of property by confiscations after the war of the revolution, that not one of the names of the Catholic proprietors who had formed the previous grand juries are to be found on the modern lists. The principal families who obtained grants of confiscated lands were those of Pakenham, Cooke, Winter, Smyth, Reynell, Levinge, Wilson, Judge, Rochford, Handcock, Gay, Handy, Ogle, Middleton, Swift, Burtle, and St. George. Those of Smith, Chapman, Fetherston, O'Reilly, Purdon, Blacquiere, Nagle, and North, obtained by purchase or inheritance.

The surface of the county, though nowhere rising into tracks of considerable elevation, is much diversified by hill and dale, highly picturesque in many parts, and deficient in none of the essentials of rural beauty. Knock Eyne and Knock Ross, on the shores of Lough Derravaragh, have on their sides much stunted oak and brushwood, the remains of ancient forests. The former of these hills is about 850 feet high. The lakes are large, picturesque, and very numerous, mostly situated in the northern and central parts, the southern being flat and over-spread with bog. The largest and most southern of the lakes is Lough Ennel, now called also Belvidere or Lynn Lake. It is nearly two miles from Mullingar, and studded with eight islands, the largest of which is Fort Island, which was garrisoned and used as a magazine by the Irish in 1641, and was twice taken by the Parliamentary forces, and ultimately held by them till the Restoration.

Two streams, one called "The Golden Arm," and the other "The Silvern Arm," formerly flowed from it—one from each of its extremities, but both have been dammed up, and the low grounds on the borders of the lake raised by embankments so as



to increase the body of water contained in it, in order to render it the feeder of the summit level of the Royal Canal. This alteration has enlarged the surface of the Owel to an extent of 2,400 acres. The lake has four islands, in one of which are the ruins of an ancient chapel of rude masonry, with a burial-ground attached, which was formerly resorted to by pilgrims from distant parts. It is said that many Protestants concealed themselves here during the war of 1641. The other islands are planted.

Further north is Lake Derravaragh, a sheet of winding water of very irregular form, eleven miles long and three in breadth, whose waters discharge themselves through the Lower Inny into Lough Iron, which is the most western lake in the county, and is likewise a long sheet of water, being about a mile long and half a mile broad, and very shallow. Its banks are enriched with some fine scenery towards Baronstown and Kilbixy. From its northern extremity the Inny takes its course towards the County Longford. Lough Lein, three miles to the east of Derravaragh, is of an irregular oval form, two miles long and one broad. Its waters are peculiarly clear, and remarkable for having no visible outlet, nor any inlet except a small stream, which flows only in rainy seasons. It is surrounded on every side by high grounds, which on the north and south rise into lofty hills from the margin of the lake, which are clothed to their summits with rich verdure and flourishing plantations. There are four fertile and well-planted islands in the lake. In the west is Lough Seudy, a small but romantic expanse of water near the old fortress of Ballymore. Two miles north-east of Mullingar are the small lakes of Drin, Cullen, and Clonsheever. Lough Drin supplies Lough Cullen, which, after flowing through a bog, falls into Clonsheever, whence the Brosna receives its supply, since the waters of Lough Owel have been appropriated exclusively to the supply of the Royal Canal.

Among the other smaller lakes scattered throughout the county the principal are Lough Maghan, and the two lakes of Waterstown, near Athlone. The fine expansion of the River Shannon, called Lough Ree, may be partially considered as belonging to Westmeath, as it forms the principal part of the western boundary between it and Roscommon. It is twenty miles long in its greatest length from Lanesborough to the neighbourhood of Athlone, and is adorned with several finely-wooded islands. Those adjoining Westmeath are Inchmore, containing 104 acres, once the site of a monastery built by St. Senanus; Hare Island, containing 57 acres, and having the ruins of an old abbey erected by the Dillon family; Innisturk, containing 24 acres; and Innisboffin, containing 27 acres. An old abbey built on this island by a nephew of St. Patrick, was plundered by the Danes in 1089.

Lough Glin forms a small portion of the boundary towards Longford; Loughs Sheelin and Rinala are on its north-western limit towards Cavan. The White Lake, Lough Deel, and Lough Bawn are small boundary lakes on the side of Meath. The water on the last-named of these has the peculiarity of being lower and more limpid in winter than in summer, and being highest in June and lowest at Christmas. In summer its colour is green, like sea water, but in winter it is as pellucid as crystal and remarkably light. The Brosna and the Inny are the only rivers of any importance in the county. The former rises at Bunbrosna, near Lough Owel. The Inny, issuing from Lough Sheelin, at the northern extremity of the county, forms the boundary between Westmeath and Cavan. The Royal Canal enters the county from that of Meath, two miles north of Kinneagad, and passing near Killucan, Mullingar, Ballinea, and Ballinacargy, after crossing the Inny by an aqueduct, enters the county of Longford, near Tenelick. The summit level at Mullingar is 274 feet above high mark in Dublin Bay. Many vestiges of very remote antiquity may be traced in the neighbourhood of Ballintubber; and others of a similar description are observable in Moycashel.

Of the numerous monastic institutions scattered through the county those of Clonfad, Kilcomeragh, Drumacree, Killucan, Lackin, Lyon, and Rahue, still remain either wholly or in part as places of worship, either of Catholics or Protestants. The ruins of Farrenemanagh, Kilbeggan, Kilmocahill, and Multyfarnham are still in existence. Those of Tristernagh and of the houses of the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians of Mullingar are utterly destroyed. The Franciscans still flourish in Athlone, on the eastern bank of the Shannon, and the same, holy community are, like the old abbey family, rooted in Multyfarnham, and the Carmelite Order still holds sway in Moate; and it is needless to say that the splendid church, school-house, and ground attached are living monuments of the piety, zeal, labour, and industry of the good fathers whose recent efforts to obtain (when abandoned by all others) comfortable houses for the poor labourers of the district, shall be long remembered by a grateful people. The monastery of Clonmacnoise, with the surrounding territory, was formerly within the county of Westmeath, but was transferred to the King's County in 1638, in which it still continues to be included. The ruins of ancient castles, several of which were erected by Hugh de Lacey, are numerous. The remains of Kilbixy castle, his chief residence, though now obliterated, were extensive in the year 1680. Those of Horseleap, another of De Lacy's castles, and the place where tradition asserts he was killed by the hands of one of his own dependents, are still visible. Sonna, Killare, and Rathwire were also built by De Lacy. The second of these stands on the verge

of a small but beautiful lake; the third fell into the hands of the MacGeoghegans, the mansion of which family was at Castle-town-Geoghegan, and some remains of it are still visible. Other remarkable castles were Delvin, the seat of the Nugents; Leney, belonging to the Gaynors; Empor, to the Daltons; Killinny and Ardnath, to the Dillons; Bracca, near Horseleap, to the Handys; and Clare Castle or Mullaghcloe, the headquarters of General de Ginckle and Douglas when preparing for the siege of Ballymore. Several castles of the MacGeoghegans were in the neighbourhood of Kilbeggan.

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#### MULLINGAR.

MULLINGAR, the chief town of Westmeath, is situated on the river Brosna, between Lough Owel and Lough Ennel, partly in the barony of Fartullagh, but chiefly in that of Moyashell and Magheradernan, and in 1881 had a population of 4,787. In 1861 the population was 5,359, which shows a decrease of 572. In ancient times Kilbixy, near Baronstown, Ballinacargy, was the principal town of the county, but not a vestige of it remains, nor is there anything about it to denote that such a place ever existed. Mullingar was one of the chief palatinate towns founded by the Anglo-Irish invaders, and gave the title of baron to the family of Petit, and it derives its name from a mill which stood on the river Brosna. For many years the town continued one of the great strongholds of the English Pale, an Anglo-Irish citadel which menaced, and oftentimes laid waste the territories of the neighbouring chieftains, and were as frequently plundered and burned by the avenging foe.

In 1328 (I quote the "Four Masters") Lord Thomas Butler led a powerful army into Westmeath with the design of subduing that county. The day before the feast of St. Laurence he was met by MacGeoghegan, at the head of his forces, near Mullingar, at a place called Ardnorvich (supposed to be Ardonaugh, about two miles west of the town, on the road leading to Ballinacargy). They came to a bloody battle, which proved fatal to Butler and his English followers and Irish renegades—the Petits, Tuites, Nugents, Delameres, and Ledwiches—he having lost his life in the fight, together with some of his principal officers. Amongst those who fell were—John de Ledwich, Roger de Ledwich, Thomas de Ledwich, John Nangle, Moiler Petit, Simon Petit, David Nangle, John Warringer, Jas. Tyrrell, Nicholas White, William Freyne, Peter Kent, and John White, with a hundred and forty others whose names are not known. The Abbe MacGeoghegan adds—

"It seems, from the honours which were paid to his remains, that Lord Butler was much regretted by his partizans. His body was removed to



Dublin to the convent of the Dominicans, where it remained till the Sunday after the feast of the beheading of St. John, when it was carried with great solemnity through the city, and back to the Dominicans, where it was interred."

The "Four Masters," supply the following notices of Mullingar :—

"1450—Great depredations were committed by the son of MacGeoghegan on the English, during which he plundered and burned Rathwire, Killnecan, Ballinagall, and Kilbixy, all in Westmeath; and during the commotion he took Carbry the son of Lisagh, the son of Rossa (O'Farrell), prisoner, and slew the two sons of Tobias, the son of Hobard, and Bryan, the son of Lisagh, in the great town of Lough Seudy (Ballymore). and, in short, spoiled an immense deal during the war. The English of Meath and the Duke of York, with the King's standard, marched to Mullingar, and the son of MacGeoghegan, with a great force of cavalry, marched on the same day to Ballyglass (near Mullingar), to meet the English, who came to the resolution of making peace with him, but they forgave him all they had committed on them, on condition of obtaining peace. The humiliating terms extorted from the English duke reads very much like a great defeat. 1464—Mullingar was plundered and burned by the people of Managh. 1475—The inhabitants of Mullingar purchased by presents peace of Red Hugh O'Donnell and the chieftains of Lower Connaught, who had wasted the English Pale with fire and sword. 1572—Mullingar was plundered and burned by the Burkes of Clanricarde, who were in arms against the Government. In that year the Burkes revolted against the tyranny of Fitton, the English governor of Connaught, and together with their allies, the Scotch, devastated the country for miles. Mullingar being a town of the Pale, was burned and plundered by them."

"Tranquillity was at length restored," says Cox, "by a victory which Captain Collins gained over the Scotch, with one company of infantry. The O'Morrissees and O'Connors of Leinster made attempts to create a diversion in their favour. They turned Athlone, and made some incursions on the English province, where they committed terrible devastation."

"1575—A shocking plague devastated Mullingar and the surrounding districts for miles." The "Four Masters" add—"Great heat and extreme drought happened in the summer of this year, so that there was not rain for one hour either by day or by night from May till August. In consequence of this drought loathsome diseases and afflicting maladies were generated in an excessive degree amongst the English and Irish in Dublin and Mullingar. Many a castle between those places were left waste, and without a guard; many a flock without a shepherd, and many bodies even of the nobility were left unburied through the effects of this distemper."

A distinguished member of the Franciscan Order, Father John Glynn, thus describes the epidemic :—

"This year, and chiefly in the months of September and October, great numbers of bishops and priests, and in general the people of both sexes, flocked together by troops on pilgrimages to holy places, inasmuch that many souls might be seen together for many days. Some came on the score of religion, but the greater part for fear of the plague, which raged at the time with great violence. It first broke out near Dublin, at Howth, and Dalkey, and it almost laid waste Dublin and Drogheda, inasmuch that in Dublin alone from the beginning of August 14,000 persons perished. It then extended to Meath, the western portion of it. The inhabitants of Mullingar were almost entirely swept away by this fearful plague. The distemper prevailed in full force in Lent. On the 6th March eight Dominicans died. Scarce a single person died in one house, but it commonly carried away the whole family."

"1583—Queen Elizabeth granted a patent for holding two fairs of three days each at Mullingar, the tolls of which were to be appropriated to the fortification of the town against the Irish enemy. 1597—An army led by the Maguires wasted Mullingar, accompanied by the O'Neills, at the instance of the O'Farrells, and they preyed the country round them, and totally pillaged Mullingar itself, in which they did not leave any property of gold, silver, brass, copper, iron, armour, or foreign wares, or any other thing that could be carried away or driven. Upon their returning back they set fire to the town, and afterwards returned safe to their homes. Mullingar was then in possession of the English Pale. 1598—Mullingar was plundered by the O'Rorkes. In 1227, the priory of St. Mary, anciently called 'The House of God of Mullingar,' was founded by Ralph Petit, Bishop of Meath, for Canons Regular of the Order of St. Augustine. As the Petits were Barons of Mullingar and Dunboyne, the founder was enabled to endow the priory liberally. Amongst the benefactors of this monastery was Walter, Earl of Ulster, who granted to Lambert, the advowson of the Church of Bredath. In 1300, Donagh O'Flaherty, Bishop of Killala, the most eminent of the Irish for piety, died at Dunboyne on his way to Dublin, and was interred with honour at Mullingar in the House of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1397, Adam Petit granted to Hugh, prior of Mullingar, 40 acres of land in Killucan. In 1597, Petit, prior of the monastery of St. Mary, died of the plague. The last prior of Mullingar was John Petit, and on the 28th November, 1539, he and his community were summoned by the Commissioners of Henry VIII. to surrender the priory and all its property, and to sign their own expulsion. In order to reconcile a few dignitaries of the priory, a yearly pension of £20 was promised to the late prior, payable out of the Church property in Slevin and Grange, and out of rectories of Dunboyne and Vastina, a pension of 40s. was promised to John Kelly, 26s. 8d. to Thomas Relyng, and 26s. 8d. to Thomas Ledwich, out of the property of Dunboyne.

"On the 20th January, 1560, the following grant of Church property was made by Queen Elizabeth to Sir Richard Tuíte—'Grant to Sir Richard Tuíte, Knight, of the state, ambite, and precinct of the late monastery of Molingar, in the County of Westmeath, a small castle and five gardens, 59½ acres of arable land surrounding the said monastery; and parcel of its demesne, with a mill, six cottages, 300 acres of arable and pasture land in Slevyne and Ballyclonen, Westmeath, to hold to the said Richard for life without impeachment of wastes with remainder to William Tuíte, his son, and heirs male; the remainder to Richard, son of the said William, and his heirs male, they to maintain two able horsemen of the English nation for the defence of the premises, to be held by military service—that is to say, by the fourth part of a knight's fee.' This monastery, during its existence, paid four marks annually to the Bishop of Meath. The Sir Richard Tuíte referred to lived at Tuítestown. A Dominican Monastery was founded in Mullingar in 1237, some say by a member of the Nugent family; others, by one of the Petits. In course of time this house became conspicuous amongst the friaries of the Order, and hence we find general chapters of the Dominicans held here in 1278, 1292, 1308, and 1314. In 1439, Richard, Duke of York and Earl of Ulster, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, granted to this house 30 acres of arable land in Kilbride, near Mullingar, for the term of 21 years. On the 31st August, 8th of Queen Elizabeth, this friary, with the church, cemetery, and appurtenances, also the rectories of Vastina and Churchtown, were granted to Walter Hope at the annual rent of £10. Inquisition, 28th July, 29th same reign, finds that three acres of meadow in Piercetown, in the parish of Dunboyne, in the County Meath, situate in the west of said town, near the river of Rathbeggan, of the annual value, besides reprises, of 3s. 4d., were parcel of the possessions of this friary. In the year 1564, the Lords Justices and Council of Ireland granted possession and custodian to Sir Thomas Goire of Friars Preachers of Mullingar, and of the parsonages of Vastina and Churchtown in the County of Westmeath, until authority should



arrive from her majesty, Queen Elizabeth, for granting a lease to him. In 1622, it is said, the Friars of Multyfarnham, commenced the erection of a Franciscan Convent in Mullingar, but it was never completed. The Capuchin Order, recommended by Dr. Dease, Bishop of Meath, was introduced into Mullingar in 1633, but there is no record to illustrate their subsequent history."

In Burke's Peerage we find that the first of the Granard family who obtained grants of land in Westmeath was Sir Arthur Forbes, born in 1623. He was a person of great interest in the province of Ulster, and in the rebellion was an officer of horse, and being zealously affected to the Royal cause, was a commander in the northern parts of Scotland for King Charles II., which, as Sir Philip Warwick writes sometime after the Worcester fight, "cost the English some pains and marches, because the commanders were chosen men, such as Lord Glencairn, Sir Arthur Forbes, and another named Middleton."

"After the defeat of the Royal army, he returned to Ireland, and was permitted by treaty to enjoy his estates. When the restoration was conceived, he was sent to Brussels by Sir Charles Coote to assure the king that if he would come into Ireland he would be declared for by that nation.

"In 1660 he was made a captain of a troop of horse, and in 1661 was member of Parliament for Mullingar. The castle, the two dissolved monasteries, with the town of Mullingar and adjacent lands, were by Royal Charter granted to him by Charles II. as a reward for his loyalty. But when the star of the ill-fated brother of the 'merry monarch' set in Ireland, the first Earl of Granard turned his coat, and became a stout supporter of William of Orange. In 1671 he was appointed one of the Lords Justices of this kingdom, and again in 1676, and in 1675 was created Baron Clonhugh and Viscount Granard.

"In 1689 he was made colonel of the Royal Irish Regiment of Foot and Lieutenant-General of the Army, and was advanced to the dignity of Granard. In 1690 he was sworn of the Privy Council under William III. He took his seat in Parliament in 1692, and was appointed one of the committee assigned to prepare an address from the House of Peers to their Majesties, thanking them for the care they had taken in delivering Ireland from Popery and slavery. He died in 1696, having built the Church of Castle Forbes.

"The second Earl of Granard was deprived of the colonelcy of the 18th Royal Irish by William III., and imprisoned in the Tower of London. His lordship served under Turenne, and took part in the battle of Saspach, and was present at the siege of Buda. He made a lease to the king in 1701 of the ground on the west side of the town of Mullingar, whereon the barrack was built.

"Mullingar remained in possession of the Granard family till 1859, when it was purchased by Colonel Greville (afterwards Lord Greville, who was elevated to the peerage 18th December, 1869), father of the present Lord Greville. His lordship, it is said, paid £125,000 for it. The estate of Clonhugh was purchased at the same time by same purchaser.

"The charter granting Mullingar to Sir Arthur Forbes, created it a manor, with very extensive privileges; and for better peopling the said manor, the town was constituted the assize town of the county. The charter of Charles II. created no corporation, nor were any officers elected. The lord of the manor was empowered to appoint a clerk of the market, and the business of the town was done by his seneschal.

"The Charter conferred on the freeholders of the manor the right of returning two members to the Irish Parliament, which they continued to do till the Union, when the franchise was abolished. The seneschal used to hold a court every Thursday, and debts to the amount of 40s. were recoverable, and a Court of Record with jurisdiction to the extent of £100, which could be sued for."

The following is Sir Henry Piers' description of Mullingar in 1682:—

"Mullingar, the chief town of the county, seated very near the centre thereof, on the river issuing from Lough Owel, which we call the Golden Hand (or Arm), and in the midst between the two great lakes—Lough Ennel and Lough Owel. The name of the town Englished imports the short mill. Indeed, in my time there had been an overshaft mill of the least wheel that ever I saw, which with buckets and all was not eight feet in diameter, but now it is converted into a breast-mill. There are also in this town on the same water two other mills. Here were anciently two monasteries, one whereof was a priory of Canons Regular, founded by Ralph de Petit, Bishop of Meath, the other a Convent of Friars Mendicant. One of these stood in the east end of the town, the other in the western end of it, the ruins of which are scarcely visible to-day. Here are held continually all assizes and sessions, and four fairs yearly, and all public meetings of the county. It is also a great thoroughfare from Dublin to Connaught. All houses here are ale-houses, yet some of the richer sort drive at other trades also. They sell all sorts of ware to the gentry abroad in the country, and some besides have large farms. Here is a new jail, built at the country's expense, for the old one is very weak. The old court-house being narrow, and inconvenient in every respect, a new one is building, very large and spacious, according to the rules of modern architecture. The church of this town is also newly rebuilt.

"The town was formerly a corporation, and had in it a public magistrate called a portrieve, and always sent two members to Parliament, but now the whole town and commons being given in fee to the Right Honorable the Lord of Granard and his heirs, the ancient corporation is dissolved, and the whole town and liberties, with other (his lordship's) lands in the country, are by his majesty created into a manor, wherein actions without limit may be tried, and court leet, court baron, &c., are held according to law. This manor, by a new and unprecedented grant from his majesty, hath liberty to send two members to Parliament, but whether under the style of burgesses, as formerly, time must show. The town giving the title of viscount to the Earl of Carbury in Wales. During the war of the Revolution the town was fortified by General de Ginckle, and became the principal rendezvous of William's forces. From Mullingar he led infantry and cavalry against the Irish adherents of James II., who had encamped at Ballymore, and taken possession of the old castle there, and it was also the headquarters of William's army preparatory to the siege of Athlone. The troops under General Douglas, who afterwards besieged Athlone, committed fearful outrages on the farmers and peasants in and about Mullingar. His licentious army plundered the people, and took with them whatever they could lay hands on—neither the protection granted by William or Douglas being any security against their resolute determination to possess themselves of the goods of the Papists; and the soldiers who thus degraded themselves were North of Ireland men."

Storey, the Chaplain of the Williamite army, in his impartial History of the Revolution, says:—

"The soldiers went abroad, and took several things from the Irish who had staid upon the king's declaration, and frequent complaints came already to the general, but plundering went on still, especially among the Northmen, who seemed to be very dexterous at that work. We had got thus far till we began to plunder, though the general gave strict orders to the contrary. Several of the Irish came in for protection, though when they had got it they were of little force to secure their goods or themselves. At Mullingar about 500 creights came in from the County Longford, with their wives, children, and cattle, and everything they could bring away. Their business was to procure the general's protection, which was granted them, and they moved homewards as the army marched forward, but were most of them plundered afterwards."

"The greater part of the English force," says Macaulay, "was collected before the close of May in the neighbourhood of Mullingar, Ginckle being commander-in-chief. The appearance of the camp showed that the money voted by the English Parliament had not been spared. The uniforms were new; the ranks were one blaze of scarlet; and the train of artillery was such as had never before been seen in Ireland."

At the General Election of 1689 the following representatives were returned for the county and borough of Westmeath—For the county: The Hon. Colonel Henry Dillon, Mullingar; Garret Dillon, Prime Sergeant; and Edmund Nugent, of Gartlandstown. Athlone—Edmund Malone, of Ballynahowen; and Edmund Malone, Counsellor-at-Law. Kilbeggan—Bryan Geoghegan, of Donore; and Charles Geoghegan, Syonan. Fore—John Nugent, Donore; and Christopher Geoghegan, of Dardistown.

Mullingar was a Parliamentary Borough, and returned two members up to 1800, when it was disfranchised by the fatal Act of Union. The following were its representatives during the eighteenth century, viz. :—John Rochfort, from 1727 to 1760; Sir Arthur Acheson, from 1727 to 1749; Lord George Forbes, from 1749 to 1765; Admiral Forbes, 1760 to 1768; Sir Richard Steele (probably son of the dramatist), 1767 to 1776; Ralph Fetherston, 1769 to 1776; John Scott (afterwards the notorious Lord Clonmel), 1776 to 1784; Richard Underwood, 1776 to 1779; Sir Skiffington Smyth, 1779 to 1784; Francis Hardy, 1784 to 1800; Major John Doyle, 1784 to 1799; Luke Fox, 1800. The following represented Westmeath during the same period :—George Rochfort, 1727 to 1731; Robert Rochfort, 1731 to 1738; Sir Anthony Malone, 1727 to 1760, and from 1769 to 1776; Arthur Rochfort, 1731 to 1761; Hon. George Rochfort (known as Lord Belfield), 1761 to 1767; Hon. Richard Rochfort, 1761 to 1769; Lord Belfield, 1769 to 1774; Hon. R. Rochfort (who assumed the name of Mervyn), 1767 to 1769; Hon. Robert Rochfort, 1776 to 1798; Benjamin Chapman, 1776 to 1784; Richard Malone (Lord Sunderlin), 1784 to 1785; Wm. Smyth, 1785 to 1800; William Handcock, 1791 to 1798; Gustavus Rochfort, 1798 to 1800. County members since the Union :—Wm. Smyth, 1801 to 1809; Gustavus H. Rochfort, 1801 to 1825; Hon. Hercules Robert Pakenham, 1809 to 1826; Robert Smyth, 1825 to 1826; Gustavus Rochfort, 1826 to 1833; Hugh Morgan Tuite, 1826 to 1830, and from 1841 to 1847; Sir Montague Lowther Chapman, 1830 to 1841; Sir Richard Nagle, 1833 to 1841; Benjamin Chapman, 1841 to 1847; W. H. Magan, 1847 to 1859; Sir Percy Nugent, 1847 to 1852; Wm. Pollard Urquhart, 1852 to 1857, and from 1859 to 1871; Sir Richard Levinge, 1857 to 1865; the present Lord Greville, from 1865 to 1874; P. J. Smyth, 1871 to 1880; Lord Robert



Montague, 1874 to 1880 ; H. J. Gill, 1880 to 1883 ; T. D. Sullivan, 1880 to 1885 ; T. Harrington, 1883 to 1885 ; James Tuite, 1885 ; Donal Sullivan, 1885.

Mullingar, as already stated, was purchased by the late (and first) Lord Greville, about the year 1859. The family of Greville came from England, and are of a very ancient lineage. Wm. Greville, a citizen of London, "the flower of wool-staplers," was living in 1398. He purchased the manor of Milcote, in Warwickshire, which he entailed on his heirs male. He died in 1402, and was succeeded by his son. His grandson, Sir Thomas Greville, of Milcote, assumed the name of Cocksey on inheriting the estates of his grandmother's family.

The Greville property according to the entail of William, "the flower of wool-staplers," devolved upon John Greville, of Drayton. A Sir Fulke Greville, a distinguished courtier, flourished during the reigns of Elizabeth and of James I., at whose coronation he was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a member of the Privy Council.

In 1604 he obtained a grant of Warwick Castle, and in 1620 was created Baron Brooke of Beauchamp's Court in Warwickshire. Sir Fulke died unmarried in 1628, and was succeeded by his kinsman, Robert Greville, second Baron Brooke, who became a distinguished general in the Parliamentary Army during the Civil Wars. He was at the Battle of Edgehill in 1642, and was killed in 1643, by a musket ball in Litchfield.

Colonel Fulke Southwell Greville married, in 1840, the only daughter of the Marquis of Westmeath. He represented the County Longford from 1852 to 1869, and was elevated to the peerage in the December of that year, and died in 1882.

The present Lord Greville was born in 1841. He married, in December, 1863, Lady Beatrice Violet Graham, daughter of the Duke of Montrose. His Lordship was elected member for this county in 1865. Mr. Marlay issued an address to the electors, in which he stated that he was a Conservative, but without bigotry. He retired from the contest the day of nomination, and Mr. Pollard Urquhart and Mr. A. W. H. Greville were returned unopposed.

At the dissolution of Parliament in 1868, consequent on the defeat of the Conservatives on the Disestablishment of the Protestant Church, the same representatives were returned unopposed.

In January, 1869, on Mr. Gladstone's forming a Government, Mr. Greville accepted office, which necessitated his re-election. He presented himself before his constituents, and as Disestablishment and Disendowment were the order of the day, his acceptance of office was approved of, and he was a third time returned unopposed. At the General Election in 1874, his lordship was bitterly opposed, in consequence of his having supported in



1871, the Westmeath Coercion Act, an Act which was largely drawn on by Mr. Gladstone in 1881 as a precedent and foundation for further coercive enactments. Mr. Greville was opposed by Lord Montague, a renegade in religion and politics, who was returned by an overwhelming majority, and, like the late Sir Richard Levinge, he basely violated his promise.

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### LYNN.

LYNN lies about two miles south of Mullingar, and is bounded by Lough Ennel and the river Brosna on the west, and contains 4,436 statute acres. An abbey was erected here in the early period, called Lann-Leire, or the Church of Austerity. The "Four Masters" contains the following notices of this place:—

"741—Comynge O'Mooney, Abbot of Lann-Leire, died. 781—Moinagh O'Mooney, Abbot of Lann-Leire, died. 843—Gormghal, Bishop and Anchorite of Lann-Leire, died. 848—Fearchair, Abbot of Lann-Leire, died. 867—Flann, Abbot of Lann-Leire and Oeconomus of Armagh, died. 893—Cairbre, Abbot of Lann-Leire, died. 900—Maelcianain, Bishop of Lann-Leire, died. 919—Cearnach, Abbot of Lann-Leire, died, of whom it was said, 'the torch of the plain (good in battle) of Bregia, the fair and lovely, stout his strength, brilliance of the sun, the sun upon his cheek, Cearnach of Leire, mournful the loss of him.' 921—Cucongalt, priest of Lann-Leire, the Tethra (*i.e.* the singer or orator), for voice, personal form, and knowledge, died. 930—Swyny, Abbot of Lann-Leire, died. 965—Flann, Abbot of Lann-Leire, died. 968—The refectory of Lann-Leire was burned by Donald MacMurchadh, and four hundred persons were destroyed by wounding and burning there, both men and women. 1002—Lann-Leire was plundered, and the plunderers were overtaken and slaughtered by the men of Breagha. 1017—Oenghus, Airchinneach of Lann-Leire, died. 1021—Maenach, priest and Airchinneach of Lann-Leire, died. 1050—Lann-Leire was plundered and burned. 1148—Lann-Leire was plundered."

"The 'Martyrology of Donegal' marks the festivals of St. Furadhra and St. Baothan (brothers) of Lann-Leire, at the 18th June, 1446. Donald O'Coffey, a good military leader, and a learned poet, and his two sons were slain on Cro-Inis of Lough Ennel of the son of Nemeth, by the sons of Art O'Melachlin, and the sons of Fiacha Mageoghegan."

The family of Coffey, of which there are a good many in Westmeath still, produced many eminent poets and theologians.

Lough Ennel, or Belvidere Lake, as it is often called, lies about two miles to the south of Mullingar, and is a beautiful sheet of water, about four and a-half miles in length, by one and a-half in breadth. It is studded with eight islands, the largest of which is called Fort Island, and was garrisoned and used as a magazine by the Army of the Confederation in the war of 1641, and was twice taken by the Parliamentary forces, and ultimately retained by them till the restoration. The names of the others are Shan Oges, Goose, Cro-Inis, Cormorant, Cherry, Chapel, and Green Island. The Brosna passes through it from north to south. Cro-Inis was in ancient times selected by the

kings of Royal Meath as one of their places of abode, and the Abbe MacGeoghegan informs us that the celebrated Malachy, "who wore the collar of gold," had a castle here worthy of so great a monarch. Here it was that the tyrant Turgesius was seized by Malachy, and consigned to a watery grave for his cruelty and oppression. There are some handsome mansions on the shores of Lough Ennel, viz.: Lynnberry, La Mancha, Bloomfield, and Belvidere. In this beautiful villa, where the last Earl of Belvidere resided, are some extensive and well executed imitations of castellated ruins. Adjoining the latter, and four miles from Mullingar, is Rochfort, formerly the seat of Sir Francis Hopkins. The house is a very fine structure, and the demesnes stretch for a considerable distance along the shores of Lough Ennel. Near Rochfort are Anneville, and Carrick. Three miles from the town, on the north shore of the lake, is Ledistown and Belmont. On the western shore of the lake, opposite to Rochfort, the site of the beautifully situated demesne of Dysart can still be traced by a few remaining trees. The house is a ruin, and the demesne is divided into farms. This was for ages the residence of the Nugent family, who were Catholics.

MacGeoghegan gives the following account of the drowning of Turgesius in Lough Ennel, in 835:—

"Malachy, King of Meath (the remembrance of the cruelty practised on his people by the fierce invaders, rankling in his breast), promised to send him his daughter to an island in Lough Vair, together with fifteen illustrious virgins. This gave delight to Turgesius, who came with as many of his own nation, on the day and place appointed. In the meantime Malachy had the country scoured for fifteen young men without beards, of known honour and bravery, whom he caused to be dressed in women's clothes, with each a poniard concealed under his robe, and gave them the instructions necessary to execute his project, which would put an end to the tyranny. He also inspired them with sentiments of religion and patriotism, and commanded them to defend the honour of the princess at the peril of their lives, and to have the doors open for him, in order that he might come to their succour, with a body of troops which he should hold in readiness, at a short distance; and lastly, to seize the tyrant and chain him, without depriving him of life. Turgesius did not fail to repair the day appointed to receive the Princess Melcha and her fifteen young ladies. He even invited fifteen of the principal officers of his army to share in the festival. After spending the day in feasting, each of the officers were shown the apartment intended for him, and orders given to the guards and other domestics to retire. Turgesius himself remained alone in his apartment, where he impatiently awaited the arrival of the princess. The porter, who was the only one of the domestics entrusted with the secret, soon entered with the princess, accompanied by the little troupe of amazons, who came like a second Judith to deliver her people. The tyrant, who was heated with wine, was about offering insult to the princess, when the young men immediately threw off their robes, and drawing their weapons, seized him, and with strong cords tied him to the pillars of the bed. They then opened the gates of the castle to permit Malachy and his troops to enter, who fell on the garrison, commencing with the officers, putting all to the sword except Turgesius. When Malachy had given the place up to plunder, in which they found immense booty, he repaired to the spot where the tyrant was chained, and reproaching him with his tyranny, vice, and

cruelty, and having loaded him with chains, had him carried in triumph before him. He allowed him to live a few days in order that he might be a witness before his death of the sufferings of his countrymen, and then he caused him to be thrown, as he was, into Lough Ennel, in Westmeath, where he perished."

#### Piers says of Lough Ennel :—

"On the south side thereof jutteth out into the lake a very pleasant peninsula, being about three or four acres of ground joined to the mainland by a very pretty neck of land of about forty yards in length, and about half that in breadth. The chersonese is clothed with all sorts of forest trees, which fill the arva, except one green spot in the centre, a place very delightful and satisfactory to the beholders, for even at a distance it affordeth a very pleasant prospect to such as travel westward from Mullingar, or southward to it. Into this water, as aforesaid, the golden hand of Lough Owel flows from the east end of Mullingar, and is united at the west end under the name of the Brosna. In this lake is an island belonging to the land of Dysart, which was in some sort fortified by the Irish in the latter end of the late wars, and held as a garrison by them, and made one of the chief repositories of their wealth. Yet, notwithstanding, it was taken on composition by the English, who held it, until by the treachery of one Ryling, of Mullingar, whom the governor of it trusted with his cots for exportation of goods. He delivered the cots unto some of the Irish captains, who by this means, on a dark night, landed their men, and set on the governor unawares, and surprised him and his garrison. No great slaughter was committed in the action, they were all made prisoners, till the English, getting together a good force of cots, forced them to surrender again."

There is an old tradition, that during the dark penal days, seven friars, belonging to one of the monasteries of Mullingar, owing to the severity of the laws, secreted themselves on Cro-Inis, amid the ruins of Malachy's Castle, and that they were supplied with food and other necessities by the faithful people on shore. How long they remained there it is impossible to say, but unfortunately for the poor fathers, their hiding place was discovered by a prying scoundrel named M——, a Government informer and priest-hunter, who hunted down the clergy in his day with remorseless ferocity. It is stated that they were hanged on the island, and that the remains of the faithful friars were removed to Lynn Churchyard, and buried in the one grave. For years the name of M—— was execrated, and up to this day the old people in the neighbourhood of Mullingar tell us that one of the name is enough in the country, and too much.

Ledistown, the seat of Mr. Lyons, lies about three miles west of Mullingar. The late Mr. J. C. Lyons, in his "History of the Grand Juries of Westmeath," gives the following account of his family :—

"There is every reason to be persuaded that the family of Lyons is of an old Protestant (or as they were denominated, Huguenots) race, and that they must have left France some time during the reign of Charles IX. or Henry III., when the country was the theatre of civil and religious war, in the early part of our Elizabeth's reign. We find in the reign of James I., 1622, that William Lyons, who died in 1633, purchased the estate of Clonarrow, now



called River Lyons, and the lands of Mullalough, or Cavemount, Killeen and Killoneen, containing upwards of three thousand acres, in the King's County, from Patrick Lord Dunsany; and we find in the reign of Charles II., which was long before the Edict of Nantes, Charles Lyons, son of William, was in possession of the paternal property there. The first of the family who settled at Ledistown was John, which he purchased from Randal Adams in 1715, who had obtained large grants of land in this county by certificate, 14th September, 1666, forfeited by Richard Hope. He also purchased property from William Henman, of the City of London, goldsmith, one of the adventurers who had advanced money to carry on the Irish war. The house of Ledistown was originally an old castle, and in the year 1769, John Lyons made an addition to it by building a new front. In 1813 the old castle was thrown down, and considerable alterations were effected."

The late Mr. J. C. Lyons was born in 1792, and succeeded to the property on the death of his grandfather in 1803. He was captain in the Westmeath Militia in 1815, and High Sheriff in 1816. He was appointed a magistrate in 1819, and was Chief Magistrate of Mullingar from 1817 to 1837, since which period the office has not been renewed. He was Chairman of the Mullingar Board of Guardians for years. On the bench Mr. Lyons was very witty, but pungent, and his sarcasm was more admired than his wit. In justice to his memory, he gave defendants a latitude to defend themselves, and permitted them to make statements that would not be tolerated at the present day. About thirty-two years ago the writer strolled into the Courthouse, Mullingar, where the great man was presiding, which at that time was a fashionable resort for idlers, and from the large audience present it was evident that the bill of fare provided for the lovers of nonsense was good. For obvious reasons I decline to give the names of the litigants who figured before the Minor, the name by which he was termed.

#### MR. K——— AND HIS DOG.

A substantial old farmer, and a bachelor, Mr. K———, who residing about two miles from the town, was charged by a constable with having a wicked dog, his property, wandering on the public road, without log or muzzle, to the great annoyance and terror of Her Majesty's subjects, but particularly the police, with whom he kept no truce—for them there was no close season. Mr. K——— was a man of frugal habits, and an economist of the first water. His canine follower was most useful to his master in keeping off the premises all tramps, or in fact any one that wanted anything from him. When the case was called he mounted the table, and politely bowed to the justices, by giving the forelock a violent pluck. He wore an old riding coat, and, miser as he was, he did not grudge the tailor plenty of frieze, and in justice to the last-named worthy, whoever he was, his most bitter enemy, if he had any, could not accuse him of cabbaging. His brogues were innocent of blacking



for some weeks, and the luxuries of Fred Lewis's toilet requisites were unknown to him. On the charge being proved he was asked if he had anything to say in mitigation of fine. His defence was the essence of simplicity—"Sure the poor craythur was in dilikate state iv health altitgether for some time past, and that it would be cruelty to animals to subject it to the indignity of log or muzzle. Troth, yer honor, he's complainin' a long time, an' he's an ould follower iv the family, an' I thought id a pity to hamper the poor fellow wid what he couldn't carry."

"What ails the dog?" asked his worship, with one of his bland smiles.

"Troth, yer honor," replied K——, "he has a turrible cowl'd, altogetther, an' a cough an' smotherin' (great laughter), purtiklerly at night an' mornin'.

"Has it a spitting with the cough?" (renewed laughter) inquired the witty magistrate.

"No, plase yer honor, he hasn't; bhud sarra bit he ates, savin' yer presence, rests on his stomach."

Mr. Lyons—"He is in a poor state."

"True for ye, sir, he is, an' id's I knows id well."

Mr. Lyons—"Now, pay attention to me Mr. K——, and I will give you a prescription that will restore your dog to health, and leave it able to carry a log."

"Arrah, my blessin' an' the biessin' iv God fall down an top iv you, throth iv there's a stray one knocking about yer sure to get id. Yer the tindher, kind-hearted gentleman; bedad id 'ill be a woe day for us here in Mullingar when we lose ye. Id's you that can give the purty, kind advice to poor ignorant people lek mesel', ye wouldn't fly in a passion, like other gentlemin, an' tell us to go be ——."

Mr. Lyons—"Mr. K——, please moderate your eloquence, and your prayers, you will have ample time for that by-and-by. Before you go home call into Mr. Murray's and get a box of Dr. Locock's Pulmonic Wafers. Will you think of that?"

"Bedad an' I will, sir, Dr. Locock's Pulverizin' Weavers." (Great laughter.)

Mr. Lyons—"Get also a bottle of best brandy, give the dog a half-glass of it, with two of the wafers through it, night and morning, and after a few days it will be able to carry a log."

"Arrah, long life to yer honor, throth yer the heart iv the rowl; bedad I'm the boy that 'ill give him hould-belly-hould in the brandy. That I may always have ye afore me the seldom time I come, faix id ruz the cockles iv me poor ould heart to hear you talk so friendly to the people; och, what a pity it is other mahjistrates wouldn't act as you do. God bless ye every day ye see a pavin' stone, and every day ye don't. A good mornin' to yer honor, I'm off now."

Mr. Lyons—"Easy, now, Mr. K——, we have had a good

deal of bantering, but what about the dog having no log or muzzle?

Mr. K———"Arrah, sure we're not talkin' about dogs or logs now, id's brandy and Dr. Woodcock pulverizin' the weavers we're spakin' about."

Mr. Lyons—"You are endeavouring to humbug, sir, for the last ten minutes; for my part, I do not believe you would give the rinsing of your churn to any poor person in the parish, nor to the dog either if you could avoid it. You are fined 10s. and costs for not having the dog under proper control, and you must pay it before you leave the court. Recollect I am not charging you for the prescription."

Mr. K———"You're jokin an me now, sir, bhud sure yer welcome to yer joke."

Mr. Lyons—"I am not joking now. I will not permit you to leave court till you pay."

Here the old man became so excited that he threw the money to the clerk, exclaiming, "My big b— k— may fall on top iv ye Minor Lyons. Id will be a blissed day for the people when the d——l takes you to himself, body and bones."

Mr. Lyons (calm).—"Now, for your disrespect and contempt, you are fined 10s. additional, and every disrespectful word you utter till you quit the court, I shall fine you 10s. more."

Mr. K———"Well, I suppose id wont be a contimpt iv coort to curse ye outside" (laughter). It is needless to say the old miser retired from court a sad, but wiser, man, and on reaching the street he showered a string of maledictions on the magistrate, and piously consigned all the descendants of Shallow to a region far warmer than our own variable climate.

On another occasion a shoemaker was charged with assaulting a woman, and threatening her. On the charge being proved, the son of Crispin was asked if he had anything to say.

"No, in throth, I haven't," replied the manipulator of leather, "I care so little about the charge that I wouldn't attend on the summons only jist to put your worship on your guard against this woman; she's always ballaraggin yer honor."

Mr. Lyons—"What does she be saying about me, sir," inquired his worship, with one of those benign smiles that litigants dreaded more than his frown.

"Why, sir," replied the unwary shoemaker, "she says you're one of the greatest ould rascals in the country, an' that it's a shame an' disgrace to have you on the bench of justice, an' that she'll have ye hunted off it."

"Anything else?" asked the disconcerted justice, apparently taking a deep interest in the artful tale.

"Och, in throth I could tell ye more, bhud I'd be ashamed."

"Very good," exclaimed the great man, "I am very thankful

to you for the deep interest you take in guarding my reputation. I will endeavour to guard myself from this woman, and I think you will have good reason to do the same. I am forty years on the bench, and it is nearly time to hunt me, but, my dear sir, before the little authority I have is taken out of my hands, I will venture to send you to jail for two months, thanking you for your generous advocacy of me."

On another occasion the wife of a cobbler charged another woman, also the wife of a cobbler, with assaulting her, and using violent language. His Honor, after gazing a few seconds at them, requested to know their social position, and whether they were widows, spinsters, or married. The lady complainant stated that her husband was a shoemaker, and that her opponent called her Peggy Prod, a title which no respectable woman could suffer to be called. The defendant objected to Mrs. Prod calling her husband a shoemaker; he was only a cobbler, and the worst that ever sat in the market-house. Her husband was only a cobbler, pure and simple. She provoked her by calling her Molly Stab. His Honor, after allowing the amazons to waste their eloquence on each other, and trace pedigrees, decided that they should return to the market-house, and that the husband of each should stitch on with a tough wax-end a theehveen on their mouths. This decision was approved of by the loungers in court. It is needless to say that the sentence was not carried out. The amiable pair adjusted the quarrel in the first public house they met.

In 1856 Mullingar came under the provisions of the Towns Improvement Act, and before a town magistrate was appointed, all offenders against the Act were brought up at Petty Sessions, before Mr. Lyons and his brother justices. It is needless to say that the great man was opposed to all innovations, or anything that tended to encroach on the privileges of the Upper Ten. The result was, for a time the Act was nearly a dead letter in the town. On one occasion the eccentric town sergeant, John M., whose special duty was to look after a certain class of delinquents, applied to the bench to know how he would serve summonses on offenders who braved the law, and set his mandates at defiance. The sergeant complained that whenever he presented them with the dread missive of the law they ran away. Mr. Lyons, after hearing the application, advised him to purchase a bottle of the far-famed nostrum for restoring grey hair to its original colour, and whenever he had a billet for his friends, he should dress in soldier's clothes.

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#### THE ROCHFORD FAMILY.

THE Rochford family, who ruled Westmeath with a rod of iron for nearly a century and a half, settled in Ireland about the year



1243, in the reign of Henry III., and are supposed to have come from France. John Rochfort was the first who settled at Kilbride, County Meath. He was the eldest son of Sir John Rochfort, of Tristledelan, of 1384, and came to Kilbride in the year 1415. Robert Rochfort, the notorious Earl of Belvidere, was born in 1708; in 1731 he represented this county in Parliament in place of his father, and was, in 1737, created a peer, by the title of Lord Belfield. In 1751 he was created Viscount Belfield, and in 1757 Earl of Belvidere. In 1736 he married secondly, Mary, eldest daughter of Richard, third Viscount Molesworth. The tyranny and cruelty practised on this lady by the monster who plighted his word to honour and love her as a wife, would fill a volume, and afford materials for a sensational novel.

The late Mr. J. C. Lyons, in his interesting work, "The Grand Juries of Westmeath," furnishes the following particulars of the imprisonment and persecution to which this hapless lady was subjected:—"The father of Miss Molesworth (Richard, third Viscount Molesworth), was an officer of distinguished bravery. He was aide-de-camp to the Duke of Marlborough at the battle of Ramilies. It was at this period that his eldest daughter, Mary, first attracted the regards of Robert Rochfort, a gentleman of very ancient family in this country. He is described as a man of considerable talent and abilities, elegant and expensive in his tastes, and highly polished, courtier-like manners, but at the same time haughty, and vindictive in temper; selfish, unprincipled, and dissipated in his conduct. He possessed high interest at the English Court, a circumstance which doubtless recommended him to Lord Molesworth, who, besides being captivated by his prepossessing exterior, had sufficient worldly policy to encourage the addresses of one, for whom he naturally anticipated honours and advancement. Mr. Rochfort was, indeed, at this time, considered one of the brightest ornaments of the court, and so highly esteemed was he by the reigning monarch, George II., that about this period he was created Baron Belfield, and afterwards a Viscount. Miss Molesworth was but sixteen, too young to venture on much opposition to a marriage which all around her were endeavouring to promote. In a spirit of sorrowful foreboding, she at length gave a reluctant consent, and this ill-fated union took place August 1st, 1736. Just before its celebration, it is said that she sat for her picture, and the idea being suggested of her adopting some peculiar costume, she was induced to select that by which, in the shape of the coiffure more especially, we recognise the portraits of another captive, her namesake, the hapless Mary of Scotland. From an early period after marriage the lady was destined to find her sad forebodings realised in the coldness and neglect of her husband. She was surrounded by flatterers, some of whom, from selfish motives, had been originally opposed to his entering the married state at all, and who were, therefore, on the



watch to prejudice Lord Belvidere against his young wife. One there was more especially, who, from the first had been her deadliest foe, and to whom, it is said, the countess owed all her misfortunes. This artful and unprincipled person had formerly held powerful influence over the affections of the Earl, and now dreaded, naturally, the influence of the youthful and virtuous wife. The year after her marriage Lady Belvidere disappointed the anxious hopes of her husband for an heir, by giving birth to a daughter ; but as this event was succeeded in due course by that of a son—a fine and promising child—we may suppose that, for a time at least, it served to revive some feelings of affection towards the mother. For the first few years after their marriage, Lord and Lady Belvidere resided for the most part at Gaulstown, a mansion belonging to the former in Westmeath, and here, in course of time, two other sons were born to them. The residence was a large, ancient, gloomy structure, of the days of Edward III. It had belonged to the chief Baron Rochfort, and alluded to by Dean Swift. The painful associations afterwards connected with it induced the second, and last, Earl of Belvidere to dispose of the mansion, which was purchased by the late Lord Kilmaine, and an elegant and modern house has long since been raised on the site of the old one. It may well be supposed that the retirement of the country, and other routine of domestic life had few attractions for Lord Belvidere, and the result was long and frequent absences on his part, either spent amidst the brilliant circles of George III., or else at the Irish Court ; for we are speaking of a time prior to the Union, when Dublin held its annual Parliament, and was the residence of the aristocracy of Ireland. Fortunately for the Countess she preferred the quiet, unexciting scenes of domestic life. Meanwhile, as time went on, the visits of the Earl to his wife and family became less frequent, and when they did take place, there was a settled gloom on his brow, a searching severity of manner, which could not escape Lady Belvidere, and caused in her mind the direst forebodings. Just eight years after this ill-fated union had taken place, did the long-threatening storm burst forth, and the lady was charged with infidelity to her husband ; the partner of her alleged guilt being one, whose near affinity to him might be supposed to have set at rest all suspicion. The account from which we derive our information states, that she at first expressed both surprise and indignation, but afterwards proceeds to add, that to the astonishment of her friends, Lady Belvidere, driven to desperation, was induced, though perfectly innocent, to make an acknowledgement of guilt, with the view of strengthening the grounds for a divorce, and thus ridding her of a husband, whom it was now impossible not to hate. Of any real infidelity she, at after periods, most repeatedly protested her innocence, and she made a declaration to the same effect, by a solemn oath, on her death-bed, upwards of thirty years after. The other

party named was his lordship's brother, Arthur, who is represented as highly exemplary in conduct, an affectionate father, and most attached husband. Between him and his amiable partner any feeling of jealousy was unknown. Happy in themselves, and in their children, both entertained a sincere pity for the young and interesting, but neglected wife of Lord Belvidere, with whose profligate character, and mode of life, they were better acquainted than was the world in general. Their country residence, Belfield, closely adjoined Gaulstown, and united alike by ties of relationship and regard, a constant intercourse was naturally kept up between them and its fair mistress. The result of the charge made against her was a trial. The principal witness against her was the artful and unprincipled woman already alluded to ; and so well concocted was the conspiracy, that damages to the amount of £20,000 were awarded to the Earl ; upon which the ill-fated defendant, unable to meet so large a demand, fled the country. The history of his subsequent life is told in a few words. After residing in banishment for many years, his Irish property neglected, and no alleviation to his sufferings, he was unfortunately induced, after a lengthened interval, to return to Ireland, trusting that the effects of time had softened the stony heart of the Earl. But he was mistaken, the seeds of jealousy had taken too deep root there to be easily eradicated. Lord Belvidere caused him to be arrested, and he lived and died in confinement, protesting to the last his entire innocence of the foul charge laid against him. Lady Belvidere, far from having the wish granted which would have divorced her from the Earl, was reserved by him for a very different fate. Her nominal residence had hitherto been at Gaulstown, an old and inconvenient structure, which afforded little scope for the exercise of that superior taste for which the proud nobleman was distinguished. Beyond its fine gardens, on which much cost and labour had been bestowed, the place had no recommendation for him, and he therefore, at this period, came to the determination of abandoning it as a residence for ever. Lord Belvidere accordingly removed his establishment, and took up his abode a few miles distant, at a very beautiful mansion, which still goes by his title, and is well known to all the lovers of the picturesque in that neighbourhood. This mansion, the building of which was hardly completed, immediately adjoins the noble house and demesne called Rochfort. Between these two mansions there remains an artificial ruin of an abbey, so true to reality, and so exquisitely designed, as to excite the admiration of all who view it. The tradition of this ruin having arisen out of a family feud is generally known, and that it was built by one brother to exclude from his sight the residence of the other ; but few are aware that with Robert, Earl of Belvidere, originated this design, and that he even went to enormous expense in getting over from Italy a celebrated Florentine architect of the day, named Barradotte, to

superintend the erection of the ruin. This circumstance, and the domestic difference between himself and a younger brother, which gave rise to it, took place at a much later epoch than that of which we are now treating, and when his lordship was in the decline of his life ; but it is so characteristic, and goes so far to confirm the singular and systematic manner in which his vindictive nature showed itself, as to render the fact worthy of notice. In making an arrangement for quitting his residence at Gaulstown, he had a two-fold design in view. He was thereby enabled to occupy the mansion more congenial to his taste, and at the same time to convert the other into an asylum for Lady Belvidere, sufficiently near at hand to enable him to keep a constant surveillance over her proceedings. In this plan he was at no loss to find coadjutors, for the landed property, and consequently the interest, of the Earl was very great in the surrounding neighbourhood, where, it is said, he reigned with arbitrary sway, his words and actions being, in fact, considered as law.

"Here, then, in a manner as unexpected to herself as it was unprecedented in the annals of domestic tyranny, was the hapless subject of our memoir confined, deprived of all social intercourse with her friends, and denied that liberty permitted to the meanest of her fellow-creatures. In all other respects there was every attention paid to her wants and wishes. She had a reasonable number of domestics at her control, and the use of a carriage, though her drives were limited to the grounds, which were, however, extensive. At the time when the edict was first put in force, which cut her off from society, the countess had not seen her five-and-twentieth birthday, and now, as year after year passed on, the bloom of life wearing away, and bringing no hope of change, so far from producing submission to her hard fate, the desire of emancipation became each day stronger. It was after twelve years of captivity that the lady, by the means of her faithful domestics, contrived and effected an escape. The particulars we have no means of ascertaining, but it is known that the intelligence was communicated to her husband, who, naturally conjecturing that the paternal roof was that which she would seek, by a rapid journey succeeded in forestalling her intention. Some hours before the arrival in Dublin of his lady, Lord Belvidere reached the mansion of her father, who at that time occupied a house on the south side of Merrion Square. Here he contrived to work so powerfully upon the feelings of Lord Molesworth, that the latter determined not to expose himself to the importunities of his daughter. We may imagine then, what must have been her feelings when told by the servant that he had strict orders not to admit her. In an agony of disappointment at the cruel repulse—which certainly no conduct on her part could justify—Lady Belvidere was for a time speechless, and utterly unable to determine what steps to take, or where to fly. Whether Lady



Belvidere was ever permitted to see her relatives we know not. Her course was tracked after she left Lord Molesworth's house, and we may suppose with what jealous rage the Earl beheld her asking admittance to that of his supposed rival. Suffice it to say, the lady was seized, and, we believe, in less than twenty-four hours after bidding, as she thought, an eternal adieu, was once more the tenant of the gloomy mansion. At length that release arrived of which she had long ceased to hope for.

"In November, 1774, died Robert, Earl of Belvidere, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, regretted by few, and so deeply involved in debt as to leave but a broken fortune to his heir. Thus for thirty years was Lady Belvidere a close prisoner, in a country where our rulers boast of the liberty of the subject, and denounce the horrors of the Bastile. How these long and weary years were passed we have no exact account to tell us. After the funeral obsequies of the Earl, the young heir, accompanied by his brothers, repaired to Gaulstown to set at liberty the lady whose cruel treatment they had ever mourned, with deep but unavailing regret. We may suppose what a change years had brought in the appearance of her ladyship, it was simply appalling. Shortly after the release of Lady Belvidere she visited Italy in the company of her son, the second, and last, Earl of Belvidere, and during her sojourn there she embraced the Catholic faith."

The second Earl of Belvidere was born in 1738. He was M.P. for this county, and obtained for himself and his father a pension of £800 per annum; he died in 1814, and having no issue, the title became extinct. His widow married the following year Abraham Boyde, K.C., father of the late G. A. Boyde, Middleton Park. The Rochforts are cleared out of Westmeath, root and branch. They were a wicked race, and to this day the name is loathed and execrated in this county. According to the traditions of the people, all the cruelties that diabolical invention could suggest were perpetrated on the wretched, unarmed people. The blood actually freezes with horror at the mere recital of the crimes committed by this family in the eighteenth and commencement of the present century. The bench of justice, if such a thing as justice existed, was polluted by them, and the judicial murders and transportation of the wretched peasantry after the memorable election of '26 shall never be forgotten by Westmeath men.

In 1836 the house and demesne of Rochfort was purchased by Sir Francis Hopkins. A portion of the property is in possession of the Boyde family; Bloomfield was sold by Mr. Boyde to Colonel Caulfield, who lived in it for years. Mr. Marlay, it is said, enjoys the settled property of the first Earl of Belvidere, as that nobleman was his great-grandfather on the maternal side. The first of the Marlay family we have any record of is John, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, merchant, who died in 1561. A John Marlay of that town was Mayor from 1637 to 1662, and received the



honor of knighthood at Berwick. He defended that town against the rebel forces in 1699 (being governor of it), but was obliged to surrender. The first of the family who came to Ireland was Anthony, who resided at Creevagh, near Ballymahon. His son Thomas was appointed Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in 1742, and Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1751. George, the fourth son of Anthony, of Creevagh, was Protestant Bishop of Dromore in 1745. A grand-daughter of the above-named Anthony was married to James Grattan, Recorder of Dublin, and M.P. for the city—father of the immortal Henry Grattan. Charles Brinsley Marlay, the present owner of Belvidere—one of the best landlords in Westmeath—presented himself as a candidate for the representation of this county in 1865. In his address he announced to the electors that he was a Conservative, but without bigotry, and that he would not like to see his countrymen shackled with obnoxious oaths (a question that was before the country at the time, for the repeal of some objectionable words in the form of the oath taken at that time by Catholic M.P.'s.) He was favourably received by the people, and the bishop and priests left it to the electors to decide between them the claims of the late Mr. Pollard Urquart and him, all they asked was to support their candidate, Captain Greville. The contest promised to be an exciting one between the two first-named gentlemen, but an unexpected event brought matters to a close. The night before the nomination some offensive placards were posted up by Mr. Marlay's committee, with which it was believed he had nothing to do, and the result was he retired from the contest. During the election campaign he was treated with respect and courtesy by all classes.

Rochfort house and demesne was purchased by Sir Francis Hopkins in 1836. Sir Francis Hopkins, the first baronet, was born in 1757, and was a solicitor. He settled at Athboy, and was for many years agent to Lord Darnley.

"He was an active magistrate," says Mr. Lyons (of course a willing tool of his employer), "and distinguished himself when in charge of a party of military, prior to the year 1798, by dispersing a body of rebels (probably some unfortunates driven to desperation by outrageous laws administered by fellows of the Hopkins type). For which and other services of a similar nature, he had, in the year 1795, a baronetcy conferred on him."

This worthy died in 1814, and was succeeded by his son, the late Sir Francis, who figured in an unenviable tragedy in 1846, which we decline to enter into. On his death the property reverted to his sister, Mrs. Tottenham, relict of Nicholas Loftus Tottenham, Glenfarne Hall, County Leitrim. The Uniackes of Lynberry, like the Rochforts, are cleared out of the county long since.

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## LOUGH OWEL.

LOUGH OWEL, rich in historic and fairy lore, lies two miles north-west of Mullingar. This lake is about four miles long by two broad. It is a deep, clear sheet of water fed by internal springs, and forms the principal supply of the Royal Canal. The banks though not bold rise to a considerable elevation, and are remarkably beautiful. Though destitute of any striking natural features, and unimproved by art (save where the M. G. W. Railway crosses a portion of it), its deep pellucid waters, diversified with its tiny islets and sweetly-varied though rather naked shores, entitles it to rank amongst the most beautiful of our island lakes. From various parts of the public road, and from the lovely pastoral lands which lie around its shores, the lake is seen to great advantage. The smooth and verdant lawns—the softly-swelling sheep-depastured hills—the wooded banks—the island timbered, and consecrated by all the mournful associations connected with ruined churches, render the scenery magnificent.

Portloman, formerly the residence of Lord De Blacquiere, is the only mansion of note on the western bank of Lough Owel. Mount Murray is at the northern end, and the fine seat of Lord Greville, Clonhugh, is situated on the eastern shore, and Levington on the south. Keating says of this lake—

“Lough Uair (the ancient name of Lough Owel), in Meath, with eight other noted Irish lakes, burst forth over the land in the time of Tighernmas, Ard-Righ, from A.M. 2816 to 2866.”

M'Gee has the following account of Lough Owel :—

“Turgesius, the Danish or Norwegian tyrant, was drowned in Lough Owel, by order of O'Melachlin, Lord of Westmeath.”

In the fourth year of the reign of Niall III. (A.D. 837) arrived the great Norwegian fleet of 120 sail, whose commander first attempted the conquest of Erin. Sixty of the ships entered the Boyne, the other sixty the Liffey. This formidable force, according to all Irish accounts, was soon after united under one leader, who is known in our annals as Turgesius, but of whom no trace can be found of that name in the chronicles of the Northmen. After gaining some battles over the natives, and plundering the islands in Lough Ree, he fixed his residence at Clonmacnoise, and from the high altar of the cathedral, founded three centuries before by St. Kieran, his unbelieving queen, in the absence of the tyrant, issued her despotic edicts. After seven years plundering of the natives, Turgesius was captured by O'Melachlin, Lord of Westmeath, by stratagem, and put to death by the novel process of drowning.

According to the bardic tale, the tyrant of Lough Ree conceived a passion for the fair daughter of Melaghlin, and demanded her of her father, who, fearing to refuse, affected to grant the infamous

request. He was seized by Malachy's faithful dependents, loaded with chains, and cast into the lake. Sir Henry Piers says of Lough Owel :—

“This lake is situated in the heart of our county, and almost in the very height of it, between the baronies of Corkaree and Moyashell, distant a large mile from Mullingar, and northward of it, a very large, long and high-seated water, and on every gale tempestuous. Here is abundance of all sorts of fish, salmon excepted—the trouts hereof are the best and largest in Westmeath. Of this water it is observable, that it sendeth forth continually two streams or rivulets, receiving none into it, except a very small one at Portnashangan, which at every drought is dry. One of these streams being the beginning of the Brosna, running out at the south end, and is by the natives called the Golden Hand, or Arm; the other issueth out at the northern end of the lake, and is called the Silver Hand, or Arm. This silver stream is of a very short course, not full a mile in length, and yet it turneth five overshaft mills, whereof the least hath a wheel twelve feet in diameter, and one might have a wheel eighteen feet, besides which seats might be found with convenience for more mills, if our country could find them employment. These mills are perennial, never dry, not in the greatest drought I ever saw. This brook empties itself into Lough Iron. Towards the southern end of the lake there is an island, and in it a church said to have been of old a place of pilgrimage. In our last long and unhappy war of '41, towards the latter end thereof, when the power of our English arms began to prevail in the country! this island was made a garrison, or a place of retreat and safety for the natives, who hitherto, and to all such like places, flocked for securing their persons and goods, until they could make their composition.”

Lewis's Topographical Dictionary contains the following particulars of Lough Owel :—

“The land around it rises gently from its margin, and is fertile and richly planted. The only stream by which it is supplied is the Brosna. Two streams, called the Golden Arm and Silver Arm, formerly flowed from it, one from each of its extremities; both have been dammed up, and the low grounds on the borders of the lake raised by embankments, so as to increase the body of water contained in it, in order to render it the feeder of the summit level of the Royal Canal. This alteration has enlarged the surface of the Owel to an extent of 2,400 acres. The lake has four islands, on one of which is the ruins of an ancient church of rude masonry, with a burial ground much resorted to by pilgrims from distant parts. It afforded an asylum to the Protestants in the neighbouring country at the commencement of the war of 1641. The other islands are planted.”

There are many legends extant of Lough Owel, and the destruction of Old Mullingar by an old witch in olden times, which may prove interesting to the lovers of folk lore.

#### LEGEND OF LOUGH OWEL.

“Playful and fantastic was the being who once dwelt and had power over the sweet valley through which the waters of Lough Owel now flow. The times alluded to were those when the Tuatha-de-Danans possessed Ireland—when magical power was very prevalent—and a fine town, elder still than Kilmallock, and worthy of its ancient dwellers, covered the bottom of the valley. The fisherman, as he in modern days pushes his boat from the shore, and is disappointed in his venture by the heavens becoming sunlit; the winds still; and the calm mirror of the lake assuring him he will cast his line in vain—it is then when he looks down, for want of something else to do, into the translucent deep, that he sees stacks of chimneys, ridge poles, and gables of houses, and even a round tower—Ireland's most ancient edifice



—and he calls to mind the ditty that his nurse had sung about the drowning of Old Mullingar. Well, what a purely mischievous person must she have been that caused this subversion. Yet so it was that a female caused it. It is very much to be doubted whether, in any case, power should be entrusted in the hands of a woman. They are quite too capricious, and they do things too much by the jerk of impulse. So it was in this instance. The Tuathade-Danans, who preceded the Milesians in Ireland, were great magicians. So writers assure us, there are remains of their feats in the land even yet, that can only be accounted for in the way of supernatural power. Could any one but a magician take a bite out of a mountain in the county of Tipperary and drop the mouthful at Cashel, where it now stands as the historic rock. In the same way with Lough Owel. Some call her a fairy, others a witch; anyway she had more power than ladies of the present day, and at one time she travels off to the county of Roscommon, to visit a witch of her acquaintance, who resided on the borders of a very pretty lake there; and every night in which witches may disport, she spent her time in fishing for Gillaroo trout; and when she was in bad humour, in turning a flat stone washed by the waters of the lake, and as ever the ninth wave passed over it, in cursing her enemies. No doubt she was very proud of her way of life: for, said she, ‘I have here what few possess, that is, fowl that have gills, and fish that have gizzards.’ Now hither the Westmeath woman bent her way, and after certain days’ entertainment and converse, such as witches alone can enjoy, she says, ‘Cousin, I’ll be lonesome when I go back to Leinster, without the sweet sounds of the wave-beating waters of the lough; will you lend it to me until Monday. I will just borrow it for the sake of seeing how it will look in my own pretty valley.’ ‘With all the pleasure in life,’ says the Connaught woman, mighty accommodating; ‘but how, deary, will you take it with you or bring it back.’ ‘Oh, easy enough; in my pocket-handkerchief.’ Ladies carried no reticules in those days,—and so she did cleverly enough, and full. Sure it must have been a rare sight to behold it hurrying eastward; high over the hills of Knockerochery—aqueducting itself over the broad Lough Ree—disdaining to delay on the plains of Kilkenny West—and then by a slip of one corner of the kerchief, coming down and settling itself, as if it was born and lived there, in the valley of Owel. No child was ever prouder when paddling in a puddle than the Westmeath witch was of her borrowed water; and like all wayward and unthrifty ladies it’s little it troubled her that thousands of acres were drowned to provide my lady with a looking-glass. But what was to be done when pay-Monday came; was the lake to be gathered up again in a shawl and sent back? By no manner of means. ‘I have you, my pretty pond, and never again shall your soft murmuring waves kiss a Connaught shore.’ But where’s your honesty, lady Westmeath? Oh, how ancient is equivocation! How long has the practice prevailed in the world of not paying just debts! Was it from this old witch that so many persons found out that it was not their interest to pay the principal, nor their principle to pay interest? Of course the Connaught witch in due time came huffingly, and demanded her lough. ‘Did you not,’ says she, ‘promise to return it to me on last Monday?’ ‘Yes, to be sure I did,’ says she, ‘but, as the Irish have it, it was on the Monday after eternity; or, as the English say, it was a Monday come never on a wheelbarrow.’ Bad treatment this to the Connaught woman. But it was to no purpose. She stormed and wept; and anger-breathing magician as she was, she could not blow back the lake, nor could all her tears create it. What is worse, she had to sit down contented in as ugly a hollow, where once those sweet waters used to flow, as ever Christian laid eyes on, all covered with limestone, and as ugly as a churchyard.”

The above legend is related by Piers in his “History of Westmeath,” written in 1682, which proves its antiquity. We were confidently told by an old woman that old Mullingar was drowned



by a malicious old witch because she was refused the loan of a putheen (a small pot) by a respectable old matron who resided in the ancient town. The following is the true story of the catastrophe.

#### ANOTHER LEGEND OF LOUGH OWEL.

Peace to thy ashes poor old Molly B——; thirty years ago you were termed by the gentlemen anglers who frequented historic Owel, "the lady of the lake." Molly lived on the southern bank of the lough in a neat little cottage, for which she paid neither rent nor taxes. She was the aged queen of the beautiful lake, and no one presumed to dispute her title; she knew all the gentry of the three counties, and every eminent tourist and traveller who visited Tullaghan (the name of her lake residence), and patronised her for a boat, and whether they bled freely or not, she had a great abhorrence of niggards and misers; some of them, she would say, "ud skin a flea for the hide an' fat." She was an ardent admirer of ancient lore, and had a decided predilection for everything old, even whiskey. She firmly believed and inculcated that Lough Owel was the repository of all the fairy treasures of Ireland, and the head-quarters of all the good people, as she reverentially termed them, from the Shannon to the sea; and that their wealth was jealously guarded by a kelpie and enchanted horse, that could be seen on moonlight nights, foaming and snorting along the banks, from Clonhugh to Portnashangan, and back to Tullaghan, scaring poachers and others from the precincts of the lake. In addition to her other eccentricities, she believed that ancient Mullingar occupied the place of the lough, but at what precise period she would not undertake to say—she left that to the members of the Antiquarian Society to decide. She knew the names of all who were drowned in the lake from the time of Turgesius down to poor Snaffler, and would piously pray for their repose, and end by declaring that they could not escape what fate had in store for them. "Shure thim that's born to be hung I'll niver be dhrowned—id's all an allotment." During one of my rambles with other juveniles we visited Molly, and heard from her the following Legend of Lough Owel, which at that time we were as sure of as Molly herself. Having asked her if she heard of Cæsar Otway's version of the legend, she shook her head and replied, "I did in troth, bhud sarra haporth he knows about id no more than my coachman, an' sarra one ever I had. Shure there's a good many people purtendin' that they know all about id, an' ud thrape ye out iv your ould shirt iv ye'd let thim. Bhud I'll tell ye the rale thure story about id."

"Ye must know that in the ould ainshint times things wint on much lek the present day, the rich had lashins an' lavins, an' the poor had to shift for themselves the best way they could.

'Twas an illigant world to live in,  
 To lend, or to spend, or to give in;  
 But to beg, or to borrow, or ask for one's own,  
 'Twas the very worst world that ever was known:

"Well, Mullingar in those ould days was jist where the lake is now; iv coorse I can't tell ye what time it was, bhud be all accounts id's a long time ago; the Market House I often hard was over near the Church Island, an' I was tould for sartin that every mother's sowl iv thim that wor livin' there at the time the town was there are alive an' kickin' still, an' carryin' on their bizness jist lek ourselves, in the bottom of the lake—bekase a few years ago whin Paddy Phelan iv Portnashangan, fell out iv his boat an' sunk to the bottom he saw the purtiest houses ever he laid his eyes on, an' sarra lie poor Paddy id tell, no more than the priest, God rest his sowl in glory—an' men an' women walkin' about, an' childher playin', an' birds singin', an' sich lek; an' Paddy often tould me he thought they wor makin' a railway there. He could not say how long he was at the bottom whin a chap kem over to him an' sed, get up out iv that an' pay for yer bed, an, he gev him a shove, an' he niver stopped till he kem to the top iv the wather, an' he was pulled into the boat jist as if he was in a trance. Well, he didn't live long after that, an' a good many thought id's what the good people took him away wid thim to the bottom iv the lake, bekase he used to be talkin' an' tellin' the naybors iv all the grandher he seen there."

At this stage of the narrative I observed that she was very long about coming to the drowning or submersion of Mullingar, and how it came about, which extorted from her the remark, "to hould me win' to cool me porridge," after which she proceeded with the legend.

"Well, at the time iv the dhrowning iv Mullingar, there lived over near Cullion, an ould witch, one Judy Cripp, bekase one iv her legs was shorter than tother. She was a wicked, crass ould hag, an' every one was afeerd iv her, an' hated her, an' whinever she wint to the town, iv coorse ye know I mane Mullingar, the gosoons used to be callin' her names, an' playin' thricks on her, an' tellin' her to take the thorn out iv her heel. She had a covetous eye, an' anything she'd see she should get it, an' anything she'd borrow she'd hould id, bekase there wor no sich things as Coorts iv Law at that time, nor Justasses, nor Removables. Well, Judy wint to the town one day on bizness, an' she wint into Peggy Shevlin's house to rest hersel, an' shure poor Peggy, who was a dacent women, id jist as soon see ould Nick himsel goin' into her as Judy, an' after biddin' her good-morrow, she wint to sit down, an' what d'ye think bhud she stood on Peggy's cat, an' me jule id gev a roar that ye'd think all id's relayshins wor after dyin', an' faix id med a bunnoge out on the door lek murder, roaring. 'Musha dirthy wather on ye,' sez Judy, 'I never seen anyone bhud id take a joke bhud ye.' 'Ramnayshin saze ye,' sez Peggy, 'shure that's no joke to walk on me cat; iv yer not out iv me house while I'd be sayin' thrapstick, I'll lave ye lookin' for yer eye in the gutther, ye ould trollop.' 'Aisy weather is best, Peggy,' sed Judy, 'I only kem over to ye for the loan iv yer putheen, jist to stew a few new praties.' 'Sarra putheen iv my share ever ye'll use, ye ould Connaught shooler, bekase yer neither lucky nor sousey to have any dalin' wid ye.' 'Well now I'll go,' sed Judy, 'bhud mind ye'll rue this day's work, an' the whole iv ye in Mullingar.' 'Ye may do your best,' sed Peggy, 'we don't care three rattles iv a tinker's praskeen about ye.' Judy darted out wid fire in her eyes, an' never cried crack till she was below in the bottom iv Connaught, wid another ould sister iv hers who was a witch too, an' iv coorse she tould her how Peggy Shevlin wouldn't obleege her wid the loan iv her putheen; an' thin, sez she, 'I'll dhrown every mother's sowl iv thim in Mullingar.' 'Bhud how will ye do that,' sez the sister, 'shure the people iv Mullingar are in a turrible way altgether for the want iv wather, sarra dhop they have barrin' the Brosna river, so you can't do id wid that.' 'Well, I'll tell

ye,' sez Judy, 'how I'll fix thim—ye have plinty iv large lakes here, an' if ye'd jist give me the loan iv one iv thim for a week, I'll bring it back to you, 'pon honor, bekase I'll have every mother's sowl iv thim smothered long afore that, an' sarra putheen ever they'll refuse me agin, never fear.' That night whin all wor asleep, she rowled up Lough Owel in her ould plad shawl, an' on she flew on a broomstick for Westmeath, an' never halted till she flew right over ould Mullingar, an' she opened the shawl an' plopped the lake down on top iv the town, an' sarra house nor home was to be seen the next mornin' bhud the big lough iv wather, an' ould Judy sailin' over id in a dish singin' lek a lark. Well long ago people out on the lake on bright days could see the houses in the bottom iv id, streets an' all, an' the ould ainshint inhabitants movin' about their bizness jist lek ourselves; an' I often hard whin the Railway was makin' through it, a chap, wid a glass head on him, called a diver, wint down to the bottom, an' shure enough there he seen ould Mullingar, an' the putheen that ruz the whole ruck, an' bedad he managed to stale id, an' id's now in the Dublin Mewzame. Well, whin the week was up the Connaught witch expected her lake back again, bhud bedad she closed on it, an' she had no way to get it back as there wor no polis, jidges, nor juries, these were blessed luxuries unknown to our pagan forefathers, so the lake was never returned."

Such was Molly's version of the legend, which we were uncandid enough to tell her we believed.

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#### THE ROMANCE OF LOUGH OWEL.

The fairy queen, Deirdre, a visit was paying  
 In Connaught, to fairy king Donn;  
 One morning she said, too long I've been staying  
 With you, my dear Doan, and on moonbeams been straying,  
 And pleasant, wild pranks on the people been playing,  
 And now away home I must run,  
 But ere I depart from the friend of my heart,  
 Some gift I would take, to keep for your sake,  
 And make me think on thee each morn when I wake.  
 Donn kissed the fair queen full often I ween,  
 And he cried, anything that belongs here to me,  
 I'm too happy dear Deirdre to give it to thee.  
 Take hills, or take dales, take mountains or vales,  
 Take children in plenty by ten or by twenty,  
 Take lake, or take river, how fishful soever,  
 If Deirdre but choose it, I shall not refuse it.  
 It might look rather shabby to take church or abbey,  
 But castles and towns you may have by the score;  
 And though the old owners, awhile may be groaners,  
 I don't care a button, although they be sore;  
 You may e'en take Croagh Patrick, away rump and stump,  
 If with it, o'er Shannon, you're able to jump.

Then Deirdre replied, at once I decide,  
 I shall take this bright jewel, the crystal Lough Owel,  
 In my white pocket-handkerchief, wrap it well up,  
 And place it at home in an emerald cup.  
 Right welcome you are, said the fairy chief,  
 To take my bright jewel, the crystal Lough Owel,  
 And carry it home in your handkerchief;  
 But take care, my dear daughter, you don't spill the water,  
 Or let the fine trout in your hurry jump out,  
 As you fly like a bird, over forest and heath,  
 To your own pleasant home, in the hills of Westmeath.

She spread her white handkerchief out on the ground,  
 And on it Lough Owel, she placed like a jewel;  
 Then tightly she fastened the corners all round.  
 From Connaught of fountains, she crossed the high mountains,  
 And flew like a bird over forest and heath,  
 With the lake in her hand to the hills of Westmeath.

And she searched all Westmeath for the loveliest place,  
 Where a smile ever beams upon Nature's sweet face,  
 And there placed Lough Owel, to shine like a jewel.  
 With a margin of green she encircled the whole,  
 Till the lake seems to lie in an emerald bowl;  
 But every one wonders what brought the lake there,  
 And to end all these wonders the truth I declare.

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### PORTLOMAN.

PORTLOMAN is situated on the western bank of Lough Owel, about three miles north-west of Mullingar. In 1841, the parish contained 417 inhabitants, and comprised 1,943 statute acres of good land, principally under grass. Within its limits is Fruin Hill, on the summit of which is a rath; near its base on the shore of the lake is the seat formerly occupied by Lord De Blacquiere. The mansion is situated in a finely wooded demesne. Besides the rath on Fruin Hill, there are several others within the parish. A monastery was founded here, anciently called Lough Uair, by St. Loman, whose festival was kept in this church on the 7th February. In O'Clery's "Irish Calendar" it is stated that Loman was of the race of Conall Gulban, son of Niall. In the appendix to the introduction of the "Martyrology of Donegal," we have additional notices of this saint—

"The feast of St. Loman, Bishop, nephew to St. Patrick, by his sister, is celebrated in his church, Portloman, diocese of Meath or Ardracain, the third of spring or February."

His staff is extant, as also his chain, by which women labouring in child-birth, when girt with it, are healed. He is said to have been carried through the air in his boat as far as Ath-Fruin in Meath, and to have built a small house in an island in Lough Huar, near Portloman, in which he lived for the most part on Alexandric herbs, of which there is, there, great abundance. We have another entry of this saint in the "Martyrology of Donegal"—

"Loman, Bishop, another disciple of St. Patrick, and he was of Ath-Fruin also, and Darerca, his mother, was sister to St. Patrick."

There is a second notice in the "Martyrology" of St. Loman of Lough Huar (Owel), in Meath, near Multyfarnham. The learned biographer of the Irish Saints, Father O'Hanlon, gives the following particulars of St. Loman:—

"His bachall (crozier) is in possession of Walter MacEdwards, in Portloman."



Temphall Lommain is on the brink of Lough Owel. The parish has a holyday. There are two rivers flowing out and no river flowing into the lake. In ancient times a town of considerable importance arose here, but not a single vestige of it remains, nor have we any record of the date of its destruction.

On referring to the "History of Church Patronage in Ireland by our English Rulers," we find the following :—

"After the Anglo-Norman invasion, the church of Portloman was given to an English Abbey, and in 1846, Thomas, prior of St. Giles, Little Malvern, in Worcestershire, and his convent, granted this church to St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin."

Among the many beautiful lakes of Westmeath, some may be found to rival Lough Owel in depth, extent, and variety of adjacent scenery, yet, none to surpass it in historic and topographical interest. Anciently it was called Lough Uair, and here sometime in the sixth century did the Blessed Loman select a charming site for the foundation of a religious establishment on its western banks. Within its limits is Fruin Hill, on the summit of which there is a remarkable rath.

Portloman house, formerly the residence of Lord De Blacquiere, is now a parish in the barony of Corkaree. The mansion is situated in a fine woody demesne. This, likewise, encloses the ancient church and the ancient graveyard: both of them rise on a gentle sloping green ridge, immediately over the waters of Lough Owel. The ruins measure seventy-seven feet by twenty-four feet. A stone, deeply embedded in the clay, was discovered some years ago. It was shaped like a coffin-lid, and it had a cross inscribed. Probably it marked the resting-place of some ecclesiastic in former times. A tourist or pilgrim, visiting Portloman, must linger long at a place endeared by so venerable an antiquity, and by so many religious associations, especially from the old consecrated walls, where the resting place of so many dead contribute to sacred and solemn remembrances; enchanting scenery is presented on every side. A vast sheet of water spreads far away to the south and east.

The ancient name of the church here seems to have derived its name from the saint, who probably, was the founder. It was called Temphall Lommain, or the church of Loman. It is likely a monastery had been established by him in connection with it, yet, not a period so far back as might be inferred from the statement of those who would make our saint a son of Darerca, sister to our Irish Apostle. In this case St. Loman should be regarded as nephew to the latter, but St. Loman's family and pedigree are assigned to altogether a different stock. It was greatly our wish to visit the ruins of St. Loman's Church, and, happily, the opportunity was presented.

After a pleasant row of two miles, in a direct course, over the still waters of the lough, the writer was landed on Church Island.

Here, indeed, were found subjects for solemn consideration. A very interesting old church stands, but in a ruinous state, on the small islet; it was built of fine limestone; interiorally it measured thirty feet in length by eighteen feet in width; the walls were three feet in thickness. An end eastern and circularly-headed window was in the gable, as yet tolerably perfect; a window can be seen in the north side wall. The west gable has completely disappeared. Elder trees grow within and around the ruins, which are also covered with ivy. An old cemetery extended without the church, and about fifty years before, the last corpse had been conveyed to it by boats and attendants from the mainland. Two distinctly-marked piles of building stones are to be seen on the very margin of the lake, and formerly these were more elevated over its surface than at present. They, however, are the debris of old anchoritical houses now completely dilapidated, but apparently resembling, in former times, the bee-hive shaped houses to be found in the west and south of Ireland. It is said St. Loman built a small house in an island of Lough Owel, near Portloman, and this seems most likely to have been the identical place. Except at the landing-place and on the higher earth, near the old church and its graveyard, lake-flaggers and reedy-grass lift their tops amid the waters on the islet's margin. In the seventeenth century there was a holyday to honour this saint at Portloman, near Multyfarnham. There too, his bachall, or crozier, was held by Walter MacEdwards, of Portloman. His chain too was preserved there towards the middle of the seventeenth century. What has become of both cannot be at present ascertained.

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#### THE DE BLACQUIERE FAMILY.

THE De Blacquiere family, the former owners of Portloman, were originally French, and are said to have descended from Anthony Blacquiere, Lord De Blacquiere, in the province of Guienne. John De Blacquiere, one of the Union Lords and plotters, who contrived to have himself elevated to the Peerage in 1799, was born in 1733. He entered the army and was Lieutenant-Colonel of the 17th Light Dragoons. He was honoured with several appointments, civil and military. He was Secretary to the Embassy at the Court of France, in 1770, and soon after Minister to that Court. In 1772 he was appointed Chief Secretary to the Earl of Harcourt, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; also to the Privy Council. He was made a Doctor of the Canon and Civil Laws, and His Majesty's Alnager of Ireland. He served for many sessions in Parliament. In 1774, he was invested with the most honourable Order of the Bath, and in 1784, was created a Baronet. In 1799 he was raised to the Peerage by the title Baron De Blacquiere of

Ardhill, in the county Derry. De Blacquiere had been Secretary of State from the year 1772 to 1777, from which period, although he ceased to hold any employment, he enjoyed the confidence of the Government, and was employed as a useful tool in hatching, and bringing to maturity, the Act of Union. Certain it is that he stipulated with the unprincipled Irish Members, the amount of reward and titles they were to receive for bartering away the liberties of the Irish people. He purchased Portloman, being part of the Belvidere property, and built the present house; he also laid out and completed the gardens, amongst the finest, the most perfect and productive of the day. Although having ceased to hold any Government situation, he by no means wished to relinquish his intimacy with the castle, and continued to supply His Excellency with choicest and most exquisite fruits from his hot houses. In 1807 the Duke of Richmond, the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Viceregal party, visited Portloman, and attended the usual annual pattern held on the first Sunday in August. His Excellency, it is said, expressed himself well pleased with the amusements and conduct of the people.

Mr. W. J. Fitzpatrick, in his interesting work, the "Sham Squire," tells us that the first Lord De Blacquiere, for his services to the Government, was appointed caretaker of Phoenix Park, and was permitted to turn out any number of cattle he wished to feed on it. By this means he amassed a large fortune, and when the Union was mooted, he was the willing, active, and unprincipled tool of the Government and Castlereagh. The nature of the services rendered by this notorious political trickster, may be gathered from the fact that his letters on public matters were purchased by the castle authorities from his descendants, to prevent exposure of the dark deeds of the actors in the terrible drama of 1798 and 1800.

The following extract is from "Ireland Before the Union":—

"An impression that we were misinformed has been expressed in reference to a statement made by us, that the papers of Lord De Blacquiere, who, next to Lord Castlereagh, proved the most efficient agent in seducing votes for the Union, were bought up by the Government from his descendants. Having submitted the passage in question to the representatives of the late Lord De Blacquiere, he assures us that our assertion, as regards the purchase, is correct. The papers filled three volumes bound with silver clasps. He required only £100 for each volume, and the papers having been examined at the Home Office, his terms were accepted. Previous, however, to receiving a cheque for the amount, he was required to sign a document pledging himself not to publish any copy of the letters thus bought. Lord De Blacquiere's family still hold a quantity of papers of a political character, which they have courteously consented to let us use if, on inquiry, the document which was signed does not present any legal obstacle. We are informed that the most interesting of the three volumes was one containing diplomatic inquiries and correspondence of Sir John De Blacquiere, when Secretary to the British Embassy to France, in 1771, and had immediate reference to the movements of the pretender, Prince Charles Edward."



The historical works which have been written on the Union, record the great exertions of Sir John De Blacquiere to promote it.

Barrington, in his "Recollections of His Own Times," supplies the following account of the Union Lord :—

"Sir John De Blacquiere flew at higher game than the other Baronets, though he occasionally fell into the trammels of Sir John Hamilton. Sir John De Blacquiere was a little deaf of one ear, for which circumstance he gave a very singular account. His seat, when Secretary, was the outside one on the Treasury Bench, next to a gangway, and he said that so many members used to come perpetually to whisper to him, that the buzz of importunity was so heavy and continuous, that before one claimant's words had got out of his ear, the demand of another forced its way in, till the ear drum, being overcharged, absolutely burst, which he said turned out conveniently enough, as he was then obliged to stuff the organ tight, and tell every gentleman that his physician had directed him not to use that ear at all, and the other as little as possible. He was in the habit of wearing his Star of the Bath over rather shabby clothes, and his black visage gave him the appearance of a Jew, and in one instance an honest rustic mistook him for one."

This remarkable man, who, as Lord Cornwallis records, governed Ireland for years, died, August the 27th, 1812, and was succeeded by his son John, who was born in 1776. He entered the Austrian Service early in life, was in several actions and was twice wounded. He lived a very retired life and dying unmarried in 1844, was succeeded by his brother, William, the third baron, who attained the rank of General in the army, died by his own hand in 1851.

Mr. J. C. Lyons, in his "Grand Juries of Westmeath," says—

"That on the occasion of the visit of the Duke of Richmond to Portloman in 1807, the guests having finished the contents of his Lordship's cellar, the pattern day of Lough Owel, and being in vulgar parlance, on dry banks, His Excellency declared that a supply should be got, without it he would be ill. (I quote the passage, vol II. p. 69). The Admiral (Pakenham) I suppose by way of assisting his friend, the host, said, 'Oh, sooner than your Excellency should incur a fit of illness, we'll sell by auction some of the fellow's furniture, and send to Bunbrosna for whiskey. The devil pity him, he should not have asked people here without the means of entertaining them.' This proposal was agreed to, and loudly cheered, but a difficulty still existed, 'where shall we find bidders.' It was suggested that if any of the persons they saw at the pattern were still there, they would be rejoiced at the opportunity of getting bargains. Very few moments sufficed to assemble a sufficient number of bidders to constitute an auction. Some of the beds and other pieces of furniture were brought out before the hall door, on a fine summer's night. The Admiral acted as auctioneer, under the superintendence of the government, the Chief Secretary probably acted as clerk, the terms were ready money down, for which a supply of ardent spirits was procured from the village of Bun. The company retired to rest highly pleased (with the exception of the host) with the last night ever passed by a viceregal party at the hospitable mansion of Portloman."

Portnashangan lies about four miles north-west of Mullingar, on the mail-coach road to Longford. Lough Owel washes the south-western parts of the parish, which comprise 2,340 statute acres, mostly under grass, there being only a small quantity of



bog. Here are also fine quarries of black stone, used also for flags. On its eastern limits stand Ballinagall, the residence of Captain Smythe. It is a modern mansion, erected at a cost of £30,000, in one of the finest and most richly wooded demesnes in the county. The Protestant Church is a handsome building, in the Gothic style, surmounted with a spire, erected in 1824, at an expense of £2,908, of which £1,892 was contributed by a former proprietor, Mr. Gibbons, who also gave the site. There was a monastery here on the north-eastern bank of Lough Owel. After the Anglo-Norman invasion the churches of Portnashangan, Portloman, and many others, belonged to St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, and James I. granted all to John Wakeman. The roof of the old church measures forty feet by seventeen.

Mountmurray or Ballinsellot, situated on the northern shore of Lough Owel, the residence of the Murray family, is a picturesque spot. The Murrays, according to Sir Bernard Burke, and Mr. J. C. Lyons, are an ancient race, and of Scotch origin. The first of whom settled here was William Murray, of Milegene. He was Lieutenant-Colonel in the Scotch army. He adopted the Royal cause, and there appears to have been placed in him great confidence, from the many matters of moment in which he was frequently employed. In the seventeenth century the family was connected by marriage with the Forbes family, Earls of Granard. He appears to have obtained his different promotions in the Scotch army, as follows:—He was captain in Lord George Gordon's regiment in 1646. In the same year he was captain of horse in the regiment of Colonel Sir John Browne. In 1648 he received his commission as major in Sir James Frazer's Regiment of Foot, and in 1650 he was made a prisoner of war by the Parliamentarians. He settled in this county after the affair of 1641, and purchased the property of Ballinsellot, which he called Mount Murray, with other lands, from Lord Aungier (part of the forfeited estate of Edmund Nugent), which had been granted in 1668 by certificate to him. He also purchased Cappagh in 1670, which had been forfeited by Matthew Ledwith, and to Thomas Newcomen by certificate in 1666, from him.

In the old castle of Mount Murray there was a stone with the arms of Murray and Forbes, with the motto "Tout Prest," and the date thus, "16, W.M., A.F., 83, from which we may infer they were at that date living at Mount Murray. On the 25th July, 1689, Colonel Murray was murdered on his return from seeing the Rev. Mr. Reilly at Stonehall. His son, Alexander, was appointed in 1695 and 1697 a commissioner for raising supplies in this county for William of Orange. This is a proof of the attachment of the family to the cause of the Stuarts.

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## RATHCONNELL.

RATHCONNELL (Rabha-Chonnail) lies about two miles east of Mullingar, on the road to Delvin; in 1841 the parish contained 2,946 inhabitants. A battle was fought here in 798 between the Danes and natives.

In 1159 Murtoigh O'Loghlin led an army here from the North, deposed Dermot O'Melaghlin, and gave the Kingdom of Meath, from the Shannon to the sea, to his brother Donagh.

Between two tracts of land of a moory nature, at this place, was a celebrated Pass, noted in the Irish Annals for the defeat of the Irish army, under General Preston, by the retreating forces of Sir Richard Grenville, accompanied by the famished garrison of Athlone in 1642.

The Pass had been fortified to intercept their retreat, and was bravely defended; but the English horse unexpectedly finding themselves able to pass the moory ground contiguous, changed the fortunes of the day, and the victory was complete.

Piers, in his "History of Westmeath" (1682), says of Rathconnell:—

"This place hath its name from an ancient leader of the Irish race, O'Connell Carnagh, who here, in some age of the world, by I known not whom, was defeated, the memory of which action lives only in the name of the place, for 'Roehonnell' interpreted imports O'Connell's rout or defeat. On this advantageous piece of ground, to oppose or dispute a passage, had no less a person than Gen. Preston, with all the choice forces, not only of Westmeath, but all he could for the time get together, throughout all Leinster, seated himself; and to make sure work, he caused a trench to be made, and a redoubt or breastwork to be cast up, quite across the forementioned neck of ground where narrowest, from moor to moor, wherein he posted his son, Colonel Inigo Diego Preston, since Lord of Tarah, who had lately arrived from service in Flanders with 300 choice men. Within them, where the ground, as I said, enlarges itself, was the army drawn up in very good order. Their several battalions of foot appeared flanked with their horse. The castle also above the walls was manned.

"Their whole army, as I have heard some say, consisted of seven thousand horse and foot. Others have not owned so much. However, the additional multitude of spectators who covered the adjoining ground increased very much the reputation of their numbers. They flocked hither this day in hopes to see a certain old prophecy fulfilled in favour of themselves, which was that a battle should be fought at Roehonnell between the Irish and English, and that the side or party that should conquer would win all Ireland.

"In this manner did General Preston await the arrival of the English army. The English, but a handful in comparison, had now passed Mullingar, with their sick and tired men, when, behold! their scouts bring in the hasty news to Sir Richard Grenville, who commanded the field, of a great and formidable army drawn up at Roehonnell to oppose his passage.

"Immediately Sir Richard draws up his forces (which were on their march) into a posture of fighting, for which he prepares. Being without kenning of his enemy, he finds his scouts had truly informed, that Colonel Diego Preston, so advantageously posted, so well lined, must be attacked, must be beaten out of the breastwork, after that the whole army engaged and beaten too; or else no passage, and if no passage all must perish by the sword.

"Sir Richard delays not—commands first one body of foot to advance to the breastwork, and force their enemy from thence. They advance close up and fire, but Preston appears resolute to keep his station. He receives our fire, and returns his. These first failing in their attempt, another body is commanded up to relieve and second them. They also make their impressions, but to no purpose. Preston will not easily quit his post. Thus all the foot take their turns, but all in vain.

"At length the weak Athlone Regiment who, on this day's march, had the rere, came up. They must on also and try their fortune, but here it was well worthy the courage of Englishmen to see with what alacrity and cheerfulness these poor weak men address themselves to the fight. Even the very sick men who had hitherto been groaning in their uneasy wagons and carts, now forsake their beds of sorrow, and forgetting that they had hitherto been sick, spring out as cheerful as if they had not last night striven with the pangs of sorrow and death. In short, they advance with as much courage as the strongest men there, and what was wanted in their strength is supplied in their hopes of being soon either victors or ending their painful lives in a less lingering and more glorious death.

"The Lord President's Regiment, with pike and shot, as close as hand and foot could try, if not by force of arms, yet by the terror of their ghastly countenances, to frighten Preston out of his so well-defended redoubt, but in vain.

"Don Diego, who had learned abroad what service was, was not more easily frightened than forced to quit his station. He had by this time once or twice been relieved by fresh men from their greater body, and appeared now as resolute as at the first onset. However, no respite was given him, and the repulsed parties still relieved one another by turns; Sir Richard being resolved either to force his way or here end his days.

"During the engagement Sir Michael Earnly had been commanded to face their horse on the bog side. He opposed their right wing of horse, commanded by Captain Bryen, and plied them with his small shot. This gentleman was that day their best officer. He had been a German soldier, and came over in the English service; had been cornet unto Sir Thomas Lucas, but at this time was revolted, and took to the Irish side. He had till now stood manfully all their shot, when at last receiving a shot in his thigh-bone, he fell from his horse. His fall so discouraged his followers that they row no longer stood their ground, but drew back under some cover from Sir Michael's shot.

"This gentleman's fall, and the retiring of his party that ensued, I look on as the first step to the glorious victory that followed, for hereby was opportunity offered to that worthy gentleman, Major Morice, major to the Earl of Ormond, who commanded. He, seeing what was done, and the ground being no longer encumbered by those horse, attempted to ride over one of those guts or sloughs in the moor, deemed till now impassable for horse, but he found it otherwise, and retiring back again he was advised by Sir Michael Earnly to acquaint Sir Charles Coote, who that day commanded the horse that were in the field. He readily advanced, and passing with his horse charged that wing that had already retired on the fall of their leader. They stood not his charge, but fell back in disorder, at which the whole field take the same course, and fly. Young Colonel Preston, that had hitherto so gallantly defended his post, thinks now to quit it as hastily. In a moment the whole ground is cleared of the enemy. Having broken all orders and ranks, they fell on all hands, and the English pursue. Many officers took to the castle, and yielded themselves prisoners of war. Eleven foot colours and one horse colour were taken. Colonel Preston, who had so gallantly maintained his station, was taken in the pursuit, having received a wound in the head.

"The new French arms and the fine collars of bandoleers were taken up apace. The Irish soldiers threw away their clogs, and sought safety in flight. The slaughter of this day was not proportionate to the numbers engaged, nor



eagerness of the contest. More, by odds, fell in the pursuit than in the action. On the English part fell very few. Sir Abraham Shipman was deeply injured in the breast in the first onset. The English continued the chase, and had the spoil of the field. The Irish enemy were pursued as far as Ballinalack, where they met their Longford allies coming to their aid, but on hearing of the defeat of their friends, they returned home. The celebrated Pass of Rathconnell was not above sixty yards in breadth of good channel ground.

"The neck of ground that here divides between two large and spacious moors, is not long before it opens and enlarges itself; not much above one hundred yards within it is a high rising ground, wherein is seated a castle and some part of an old wall, having a small round turret on one end, all which, one above another, command this narrow Pass, the moor on each hand.

"This Pass hath in all ages been deemed impassable for horsemen, being of a low meadowish ground, interlarded in many parts with deep sloughs or guts, where waters sometimes fall. Nevertheless they are traversable enough by light footmen. These moors or low grounds are so widely extended that without a mile or two miles' travel backwards, and fetching a compass of much more ground, there is no passage on either hand for horse or cart."

We have endeavoured to discover the details of the above battle from independent and unprejudiced sources, but failed. The second volume of Gilbert's "History of the War of the Confederation" quotes a despatch of a Captain Tucker, a follower of Grenville's, "It is to be observed that the great hand of God, in this battle, was visible, as not many of our soldiers fell, as the balls of the enemy dropped down without injuring any of our men. We gained eleven colours, and divers prisoners of note. In this fight the hand of God was with us during the conflict, for a violent storm of hail came on which beat in the faces of the enemy, and on the backs of our men; young Preston was made prisoner, and brought before Sir Richard Grenville. He said that he fought by authority, and refused to give any information. He was committed to prison. This battle was fought 7th February, 1642."

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### SELLING THE PASS.

THE defeat of the Irish army, under Preston, by Grenville, on the 7th of February, 1642, was supposed to be the result of treachery—that the Pass across the moor had been betrayed to the English by a false bogtrotter who resided at Curraghmore, and who knew the secret. I was told a legend of the transaction some years ago by an old man who was versed in all the traditions of the locality, and the good man was even prepared to swear to its accuracy.

"In the days of the spalpeen, Crumwell, whin no man's life or property was safe, the ould coort av Roehonnell was a very strong place altogether. Av coorse that was long afore the king-killer pulluted our soil—whin our forefathers lived snug and comfortable, an' ate an' drank what kem aff the land, as there wor no sich things in those times as landlords nor English markets. We wor in blissed ignorance av those things. Well, the English sodgers wor at the time I'm spakin' av—Crumwell's days—livin' at Athlone, plunderin' the neighbours, robbin' chapels, haugin' priests, an' confiscatin' the



property av the Catholic gentry ; an' the henroosts for miles wor ransacked for dainties for Sir Richard Grenville, Coote, Earnly, and other Saxon thieves. But, bedad, whin everything was at the last, an' whin the people began to despair, me bowld Sir James Dillon, one av the noble ould race av Drumraney, kem on an' put an ind to their murderin' capers. Havin' got together a lot av stout chaps from Westmeath an' Roscommon, he laid siege to the castle av Athlone, an' placed a party av his men at Ballykeeran, near the banks av Lough Ree, an' they did good sarvice, bekase sarra morsel av vittels sint be the English from Mullingar or Dublin to the sodgers in the castle but they took, an' divided it with their frinds who were besiegin' the castle ; an' they took care to hould the messengers, an' av coorse this deludhered the English, who thought they remained to fight the Irish papists, as they used to call us.

"But to come to the point. The English sodgers, who can't live without vittels lek the poor Irish, whin their stomachs began to cry 'cupboard,' bedad they towld their ginerals that an empty sack couldn't stand, an' that if they didn't get vittels they'd skedaddle. It was a purty thing to die for glory, but to die av hunger while in sarch av the bubble reputation was another thing. Hunger, we're towld, makes hayroes ; but, bedad, I think it makes cowards, too.

"Well, whin they found out that they could not stand the hunger any longer, they med a parley with Sir James Dillon. and he let them off in sarch av more favoured pastures, an' whin the people of Mullingar hard av the approach av the hungry army comin' from Athlone, bedad they packed up every eatable article they had, even to the lumper praties, an' hooked it off to the islands of Lough Owel ; bekase they knew that a hungry English sodger would ate the horn av a blacksmith's anvil, if it wor but greased.

"Well, whin they kem to Mullingar the sorra hap'orth was to be lifted that they could ate, barrin' a couple of ould asses that wor past their labour. They kilt an' skinned thim, an' roasted an' ate thim harty, and sarra hap'orth they had to wash down the tough beef but a drink out of the Brosna river. But I must come to another part av me tale. You must know that the ould bog in Curraghmore, in the days I'm talkin' about, was double as big as it is now. Some say that in ainshint times a piece av it walked off wid itself to Clooneyhide, and forgot to come back.

"But I must ax your pardon, bekase I'm a pratin' ould chap, jist like a self-acting machine or music box ; I can't stop till me works are run down. During the troublesome times Paddy Mickaran lived at Curraghmore, an' had a nice house in the bog. He knew ivery hole an' corner so well in the place that he was known be the nickname of 'The Rat in the Bog.' He was a great turf-cutter, an' used to sell any amount av it in Mullingar, bekase coal was then unknown to us. He was very fond av drink, I'm towld, so much so that he'd sell Biddy an' the childher for it, an' lek some av our counthrymen at the Union, he'd sell the counthry, an' be very glad to have it to sell.

"On the 6th February, 1642, Paddy was at Mullingar with turf ; it was a cowl'd day too, as a bitter north win' was blowin' that would cut the nose off a piper, whin in marched the hungry army from Athlone on its way to Dublin ; an' whin they hard that Preston had the Pass closed against them, faix it annoyed the English ginerals a bit. Paddy dodged about the sodgers till he got a chance av spakin' to the Head General, an' bedad he towld that in wan av his turf-cuttin' exprimints he kem upon an ould road in the bog that was med by the Danes ages before, that the peat grew over it, and that no wan knew it but himself, and that it led round to the back of Roehonnel Castle, an' that if he wor well ped he'd show it to thim at wanst.

"The bargain was med, an' the ginerel gev him all the money he had about him, an' said he'd give him double as much when he'd reach Dublin, an' that he'd make Crumwell give him a large estate.

"Whin he got the money he towld the Englishman that whin he'd go home he'd walk over the part of the bog where the road lay, and that his tracks would be a guide for the cavalry to follow to attack the Irish in the

rere. After putting up close the reward ov his treachery in his breeches pocket, he returned home to earn the blood-money, and out he started like a dhould, and took across the bog in the direction of the castle.

"He was not long crossin' the moor, an' he was jist plantin' his vile foot on the green, firm sward, when a musket-ball fired from the turret of the castle penetrated the heart of the traithor. In his death agony he was seen to pitch something away from him indignantly, which was picked up by wan av the sodgers, an' which turned out to be the reward of his trayson, the goold he had got for basely sellin' the Pass. The sodger who shot him was on sintry, an' takin' him to be a spy, let bang.

"The garrison made a gallant resistance, but overpowered be numbers, I'm towld they wor slaughtered in cowld blood. You might sarch the whole barony now, an' sarra wan of the name of Mickaran is to be found. For years afterwards, I'm towld, Paddy's ghost used to be ramblin' about the roads, shakin' a purse at every wan he'd meet; but he was very useful to the naybors in the bog, bekase sarra wan would venture afther night to stale a creel of turf out av it, no matter how cowld the weather was."

*(To be continued in Vol. III.)*



## MOATE AND ITS ENVIRONS.

**M**OATE, one of the principal towns of Westmeath, is situated about sixteen miles west of Mullingar, and contains the usual public buildings—viz., a neat Court-house, a branch of the National Bank, a Protestant Church, meeting houses for Methodists and Quakers, and two Catholic Churches—the parish chapel, and convent chapel of the Carmelite community. The Carmelite convent was founded here about the year 1779. After the dispersion of the order of Ardnacrana, consequent on the success of Cromwell, some of the friars fled to the continent, and others took refuge in the caves and woods of the country. In course of time these heroic men passed away, and were succeeded occasionally by other members of the community who discharged parochial duties in other parts of the diocese. About the year 1735, some of the order returned from Spain and took up their abode in the neighbourhood of Moate, where they were supported for many years by the generous people of Westmeath. When the storm of persecution was about to cease, a Mr. Potts succeeded in getting them the present site about 1770, from one of the Clibborn family, and here the friars built a chapel, which in '98 was turned into a barrack for soldiers, and portion of it made use of as a stable for horses. During some time the convent of Moate held so conspicuous a position amongst the Carmelite communities that it was the novitiate of the order in Ireland. The present handsome church, which is of Gothic architecture, is in every way worthy of the pious and zealous fathers who erected it at a cost of nearly £3,000. The Carmelite community of Moate identify themselves at all times with the people in their struggles for civil and religious liberty, and their advice is often sought in matters social and political. Moate of Grenoge—the Moate of young Grania or Grace, as it is called, a moat or rath, behind the town—is a pretty place well worthy the attention of tourists. Here it was that Charles Lever located one of his last creations, Daniel O'Donagan, the Fenian organiser, the original Stephens; Mathew Carney (Lord Kilgobbin) and his college chum, Joe Atley; but strangers will search in vain for the classic locality described by the novelist—Mud Island. There is an old legend in existence about a Milesian princess, a daughter of O'Melachlin, King of Meath, who resided in Cro-Inis, one of the islands of Lough Ennel or Lynn Lake, visiting Moate and taking on herself the office of Brehon; and on the hill of Knockdominy it is said that she adjudicated cases, and delivered the oral law to the good law-abiding citizens of the Clara Road and the Gap of

the Wood; but times are sadly changed. The innovators of the nineteenth century, the Becketts and Stewarts, care little about Brehon laws or the renowned Ollam Fodhla. Moate of Grenoge is surrounded with ruined castles and churches, moats, rathis, and memorials of the wars, the feuds, and the ferocities of former times. The pretty, grassy, and well-cultivated hills around the town, surrounded as they are by large bogs, have a good military position, being the scene in the wars of Ireland of many a skirmish and battle. Here, in the wars of the Revolution, a severe battle was fought between the forces of Willam of Orange, under General De Ginckle, and of James II., under Brigadier-General Clifford. The Irish, with great bravery, attempted to defend the town, which was merely ditched and palisaded, but were forced to evacuate it, and fall back on Athlone, the horses retreating by the road, the infantry through the bogs and fastnesses with which the country abound. Here the rapparees, who in those days were so numerous (thanks to the confiscating penal code that had despoiled them of their property) and so effective, and who seemed to be actuated with the same spirit, and to put in practice the same warfare as the Spanish guerillas, to the no small astonishment of the English army, had recourse to a manœuvre with which they were familiar—a large party that had skirmished with the British regiments, and given them no small annoyance by their bush firing and desultory attack, driven by the bayonet, fled to the red bog on the left of the town, and there, as if by enchantment, hundreds of men, in the open day, disappeared; they were gone as ghosts, and not a single runaway could be seen as a mark for bullet or a butt for a bayonet or pike.

Storey, in his interesting account of these civil wars, thus describes this occasion:—

“The rapparees escaped to the bog and in a moment they all disappeared, which may seem strange to those who have not seen; but something of this kind I have seen myself, and it is thus done:—When the rapparees have no mind to show themselves upon the bogs, they commonly sink down between two hillocks grown over with long grass, so that you might as well find a hare as one of them; and they conceal their arms thus—they take off the lock and put it in their pockets, or hide it in some dry place; they stop the muzzle close with a cork and the touch-hole with a small quill, and then throw the piece itself into a bog-hole. You see one hundred of them without arms, who look like the poorest, humblest slaves in the world, and you may search till you are weary before you find one of their guns; but yet when they have a mind to do mischief they are all ready at an hour’s warning, for every one knows where to go and fetch his own arms.”

The poor rapparees were the protectors of the humble, the outraged, and the oppressed in the dark penal days, when everything appeared hopeless and cheerless. When the desolating sword of Cromwell had swept through Ireland, when the land, drenched with blood and marked with misery and ruin, lay



prostrate at the feet of the regicide, he calmly surveyed the scene of death and desolation he had made, and said—"Surely the land is conquered now." It is true that the Irish armies had melted away before the overwhelming bayonets of the enemy, their best hopes were shattered, and their best generals were dead, but still the spirit of the people was unconquered, thanks to the fidelity of the rapparees.

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#### KNOCKDOMINY.

THE old hill of Knockdominy lies at the north of the town. In the early part of the present century our benevolent rulers had a gallows erected on it for the execution of unfortunate offenders who endeavoured to protect themselves from tithe-proctors and other privileged scoundrels. During the sanguinary years of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Knockdominy and the adjacent bog afforded shelter to the victims of tyranny, and many traditions are extant of those who found a safe covert from the informer, priest-hunter, and brutal soldiery. The last time I visited Moate I had the good fortune to meet with an old gentleman, of course one of nature's creation, a citizen of Burgess's Lane, a locality that enjoys many time-honoured privileges, who appeared to be well versed in all matters relating to the district. After showering maledictions on the pernicious effects of machinery, on trade, and on all goods manufactured in England and purchased by the Irish, the manipulator of leather, for my new acquaintance turned out to be a shoemaker, proceeded to relate to me the story of

#### SHAWN O'DEEGAN, THE RAPPAREE OF KNOCKDOMINY.

"Long afore the Quakers established their quarters in Moate of Grenoge, or their founder, George Fox, the ould mad shoemaker, who went about the streets of Lunnon proclaiming that he was the long-expected Messiah, followed by the corner-boys of the metropolis, Shawn O'Deehan lived snug an' comfortable near the ould round tower of Tinny-muck. At the outbreak of the war between King Shemus and his son-in-law, Billy of Orange, Shawn took sarvice under the faithless Stuart. He fought at the Boyne, Aughrim, Ballymoe, and Athlone. After the surrender of Limerick, when the Wild Geese went over to France, Shawn refused to lave the counthry, bekase he said he'd stop to avenge the wrongs done to his kith an' kin, particularly himself, bekase he was robbed iv his property by the Crumwellians. Findin' that he had no chance of redress from the rulers iv the counthry, he watched his enemies late an' early, at home an' abroad, an' he an' a few others cut them down lek trawneens, took their money, an' divided it amongst the poor, who were robbed lek themselves. Shawn an' his band had many hiding-places; of course the peasantry sheltered thim at all times, an' supplied thim with food. Well, their principal place of meeting was on top of Knockdominy. Of course you must know that there was a cave in it at that time, but I never saw it; my grandfather was often in it an' he a gossoon, afore it was smothered up. The hiding-place was one of singular loneliness and desolation; you might pass the way a thousand times an' not to know it; it had evidently

been used by the peasantry as a place of retreat in times of peril and strife. No better place could be selected than the summit of the ould hill for carrying on the war of reprisal by the rapparee chief. The common mode of warfare practised by the little band was to carry off whole herds of cattle from the enemy, and to detain them till ransomed by the owners. The deep glens surrounding his retreat in the cliff screened his booty, taken in his predatory incursions from the closest search. O'Deegan was endued with great swiftness. In one of his incursions, being detached from his band an' alone, he fell in with a party of troopers and was pursued for miles. Being hard pressed by the pursuers, he ran towards a yawning chasm that overlooked the Brosna river, and with the swiftness of a young chamois, flew over it, to the horror and amazement of those who sought his life.

"Shawn the Rapparee had a female companion to soften the gloom and horror of his dark dwellin' and to share his life of outlawry and peril. Her name I often hard was Biddy Dunleavy, an' the ould people used to say that she was a shockin' purty girl; bhud the temptation iv a large reward offered by Government spies induced her to betray him. She used to go in and out to Moate now an' again for provision, an' she agreed wid an officer to betray him an' his hidin' place. A few soldiers were to be stationed near the hidin' place on the opposite side of the hill from which he used to emerge, an' on his leavin' the cave the followin' mornin' he was to be shot down lek a dog. For this piece of perfidy Biddy got a written acknowledgment that she would get the reward when her paramour would be removed. On her return to the cave she pretended the greatest friendship for him; bhud what do ye think, the bit iv a letter that she was after gettin' was stickin' out iv her bosom, an' Shawn, thinkin' that it might be a love epistle from a rival, snatched it, an' there he read her treachery in full. Enraged at her trayson, he gagged her an' tied her hands an' feet, as he scorned to kill or ill-treat her, so he left her to her fate, an' he started off to the King's County, followed by his devoted followers. For some time after his flight he carried on his ould trade of war to the knife against the foes of Ireland; but being seized with a violent fever in a wild district of Tipperary, he was betrayed by his nurse-tender. O'Deegan was as yet unable to quit his bed when the hovel in which he was confined was surrounded by armed men; he was wrapped in his blanket, and laid upon a cart, to which he was fastened down by strong ropes. The soldiers concluded he was dying, and were less watchful of their prisoner. Upon reaching Nenagh he cut the cords that bound him with a sword that he had with him in bed in the hovel. A sudden rush from the cart and the flashing of the bright steel filled the soldiers with astonishment, and in the moment of their irresolution and dismay he effected his escape.

"At length the hour approached that was to terminate the career of the bold outlaw. A person in whom he confided, and whom he often befriended, resolved to betray him, tempted by Government reward. The traitor made known to his wife his perfidy, who endeavoured to dissuade him from his fell purpose, but he was deaf to all entreaties, and, with the object of carrying out his plan effectually, he invited the unsuspecting rapparee to his house. On entering the dwelling of his false friend, the traitor pretended that he had to go for some liquor to regale his guest, and under that pretence he strutted off for the soldiers, who were secreted a short distance from the house. O'Deegan, finding that he was betrayed, made a gallant fight, but bravery was of no avail, the gallant fellow was shot down.

"After the death of the outlaw his little band of devoted followers wandered over the country till they got a chance to escape to France to their brethren in arms, the Irish Brigade, who were winning laurels for the 'Grand Monarque' on the battlefields on the Continent."

Such was the story related to me by the brogue-builder of Knockdominy.

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### THE HILL OF KNOCKASTIA.

THE hill of Knockastia, one of the most remarkable summits in the district, is situated three miles north-east of Moate. It attains a height of 660 feet, and affords those who ascend it a good view of the surrounding country, with all its fertile hills, valleys, marshes, and boggy flats. Within a short distance of its base are the mansions Grouse Lodge, Coolatore, Rosemount, and Ballintubber. In the good old days, before the praties got black, or Scorpion Stanley got up national education, Knockastia was inhabited by ghosts, fairies, and leprechauns, to the great annoyance of the simple peasantry of the district during their midnight cantrips. An old woman assured me that in the dead of night, when the surrounding hamlets were buried in deep repose, and when nothing else disturbed the solemn stillness of midnight, the wild unearthly scream and laughter would burst upon the ears of the slumberers and awake them to anything but pleasant reflections.

### PADDY KILFOZEY AND THE LEPRECHAUN.

The leprechauns who infested Knockastia in old times were artisans of singular sagacity and penetration—broguemakers, tailors, weavers, and carpenters. Old times must have been curious times, when a man could not go outside his own cabin door after night-fall without meeting with fairies and linawnshees—when one of the Milesian families could not depart this life at home or abroad, in battle or peaceful bed, but half the country was frightened from its propriety by the dismal wailing of the banshee—when it was the most dangerous thing in the world to insult an old woman, particularly if she was a stranger, lest you might draw the spiteful vengeance of an old witch upon your back; what caused your most fruitful milch cows to become suddenly dry, and your young cattle to die of strange disease; when leprechauns were to be met with in every silent glen, and music heard in every rath. These were old times; but who would like to live in such times; yet in these old times the poor were better off than they are now. Paddy Kilfozey, the poor son of a lonely widow, lived at the southern base of the hill, in a rude cabin secluded from the world. Paddy tended his solitary cow and tilled his spot of land; and at times he brought the produce of his farm to Moate or Kilbeggan. Now, though Paddy was poor and crooked, with a hump on his back, yet he was a warm-hearted, good kind of a generous little fellow; and one day as he went to sell his turkeys to Moate, and they were very fine ones, he went up to the mansion of one of the real old gentry, Mister F. At the period of our story the gentleman named was on his last legs, plunged head and heels in debt by extravagance and dissipation, horse-racing, cock-fighting, and duelling. In the language of the peasantry ‘sarra one ud trust their brogues to the cobbler wid him.’ Mr. F. and his fair daughter Kathleen were at one of the casements as Paddy approached, and his strange appearance, dressed in an old suit of cast livery, in no way contributed to render him a favourite with the fair sex. Paddy was smitten with the beauty of Miss F., for gentle reader,

‘Love will enter in  
Where it daurna well be seen.’



Mr. F. having examined the turkeys declared them excellent, but added that he had no spare change in the house or he would keep them, to which Paddy replied that money was of no consequence if his honor had a fancy for the bipeds. Paddy returned with a light heart, or rather without one, he could think of nothing but the lovely Kathleen and her long rich flowing tresses of black raven hair, her large commanding dark eyes, and her graceful and queenly form made a deep impression on the heart of the simple peasant. The next evening as Paddy was straying by the lonely banks of the little river that skirts Rosemount, wrapt up in the picture which his fancy had wrought for him, he wandered into a little wooded dell that gently sloped to the brink of the clear water, it was a silent and secluded spot, where the hazel and whitethorn mingled, and the low sloethorn formed a charming defence round their roots. He paused as he came to the brow of the sloping dell. The summer sun was sinking away in the far west and casting his departing beams into the bosom of the glen, tinging the tree and shrubs, and the curling ripples on the clear river with a golden hue. He paused to admire the scene, for though he often trod its wooded mazes before, yet he thought it never looked so rich. Suddenly a slight tapping noise at a distance caught his attention, and he turned his head towards the place the sound was coming from, a close entangled clump of hazels, blackthorn, and briar, out of the centre of which arose a tall wide-spreading ash tree. He stole round the clump on tip-toe, and at the sunny side he beheld a little figure not as big as a creepy stool, sitting on a seat hammering away at a little shoe that was laid across his knees. He gazed for a moment at the unearthly being, who appeared so busily engaged at his work as not to notice the mortal intrusion. He was dressed in an old and long disused habit, with a curiously formed covering on his head, and his little features were tawny, puckered, and spiteful like those of a crabbed old man. Paddy often heard of the leprechaun, and he knew the tiny creature before him was one of the tribe.

Summoning his faculties to the task, he approached the fairy shoemaker, 'A fine evening for your work this, my little man,' said Paddy, fixing his eyes steadily on the leprechaun, and determined to hold him fast despite the consequences. 'It is, indeed, Paddy Kilfozey,' replied the little man, looking somewhat startled, but with a spiteful and malicious grin. 'Musha thin you're a fine little broguemaker,' said Paddy. 'Shure I'm nothin' to that man behind you, you crooked, humpy-backed, ould thief!' Paddy, having often heard of the tricks and wiles resorted to by those beings to release themselves from human power, and aware that this was said to induce him to look aside that the little man might escape, replied, 'I'd rayther be lookin' at yourself, me ould boy,' said Paddy. 'Who is the man crossin' the river there?' said the leprechaun, pointing at the water. 'You may go look and ax, you ould schamer,' replied Paddy, stooping down and catching hold of the little man by the waistband of the breeches. 'Come, tell me this minute where there is plinty of money, or as shure as I stand here I'll let out yer tripes or put ye on a gridiron to roast,' and he drew a large clasp knife from his pocket, which he opened with his teeth, still keeping his eyes unwinkingly on the leprechaun. 'Shure you wouldn't murder the likes of me?' said the unearthly man. 'I don't want to curse or swear, but if you don't let me have the goold widout any nonsense I'll give you your guts for garters this mortual minnet,' said he, with a wicked, determined look. 'Och, thin don't look so black entirely, an' I will tell you all about it; but take the point of that ugly knife away from me, an don't squeeze me so hard out an out,' and Paddy relaxed his grasp and put away the knife. 'Do you know where the big hill of Drumhurling is?' said the little man. 'I hard talk iv it,' said Paddy; 'shure its beyant the Crazy Corner.' 'Well thin, at the foot of a big rock, where there is a lone bush, on the very top of the cliff, there is a crock iv goold that would buy the whole of Westmeath. Now let me out.' 'Ketch me at it, me ould codger. It's not me you'll get to run from one end of the county to the other on a fool's arrand. It wout do; you must get it for me nearer home, or by the contints of Moll Kelly's stone jug, I'll let out



yer puddins, so I will!" said Paddy. "Oh, thin, don't curse, you poor unfortunate fellow; aisy weather is best. Do you know where the Hill of Mullagheloe is? Now, there is an ould dry well there covered up, and there's a chist of goold there that ud buy all Leinster, an' I'm shure you'd like to get it," said the ould chap with a sneer. "It's of no use in you talkin' to me that way," said Paddy, "if you haven't it in a brace of shakes I'll knock the sowl-case out of you!" "Och, it's a purty way you're talkin'," said the leprechaun, looking about in alarm, "an' there's Jack Muldoon's wicked bull running as hard as he can to kill us." "Where? where?" yelled poor Paddy, who was lame, and a bad substitute for a race, looking around him in horror. At the same time a wild unearthly laugh rang in his ears, and on looking about again his hand was empty, and the leprechaun vanished. "Och, me heavy hatred on him, the mane dirthy sleeveen, to thrick me in such a way; bhud it's the puck you are altogether, you weeny bligard. Niver mind, maybe its ketchin' ye agin I'd be afther!"

Paddy returned home, and told his old mother of his adventure, and how the little man tricked him. The old hag who was deeply versed in all the old rules in such cases, shook her head. "You'll be either a man or a merchant yet," said she.

"If ever you meet him again don't be waitin' to know where it is but make him give id to you on the spot, and lay his back up again a stone and swear that if he does not give it to you afore you count a score that you'll cut his wizen." The next day Paddy took a strole along the banks of the old river; the place was wild and uninhabited at the time. The stream was a favourite haunt of his, and its silence and gloom accorded with the tumult within his mind, and from morn to eve he used to be stretched listlessly on the green turf in a tangled copse pouring over the running river and picturing to his fancy crocks of gold and the fine chance he had lost. One evening while thus extended beneath the rays of the setting sun he heard again the quick continued though light tapping, which led him to the haunt of the leprechaun before, and bending his ear to listen, he silently gathered himself to his limbs. "This is him for sartain," exclaimed Paddy, "bedad me fortune is med now, faix I'll hould a tight houl't iv him this time." He anxiously and cautiously stole to the spot from which the sounds issued, and seated at the foot of a dwarf elder, he beheld, busily engaged at his old employment, the withered little man of the brake. Paddy fixed his eyes upon him, and drawing his skein from his pocket opened the blade stealthily, and then approached the old man with a rapid stride. The ill-fared tiny thing grinned up in his face as he darkened the sunbeams with his shadow. "Is that you Paddy Kilfozey, how did you get away from Jack Muldoon's bull?" "I have you agin, you mane bligard ould sconce that humbugged me," said Paddy, seizing him with a firm grasp, "and be me conskins I'll hould you now." "Look at that fellow there laughing at your ould hump and makin' game of your lame leg." "I'll not say anything to you now, you ould scamp, bhud I'll squeeze you lek a lemon, iv you don't tell me where the money is. You'll not desave me now you ould deluderer." "Wisha, thin, it is very wicked thin' you are this evening, maybe you wouldn't bate your match," said the leprechaun, "bhud there's the purty Miss F. and her father coming alongside the river yander." Paddy started—the old fellow touched his heart-strings, yet he paused and at once perceived the drift, and determined not to change his look if death was at his back. "Spake to me no more," said he to the fairy, "don't spake to me one word more bhud bring me up plinty iv rale ould yellow goold in a minute or I'll let out your tripes, so have id ready afore I count a score orid's all up wid you." "Stop, stop," cried the leprechaun, "you're a lucky man Paddy Kilfozey, and you have won the day. I'll give you all you want, and more than you require," and he stamped with his foot upon the spot where he stood, which opened and disclosed a large earthen vessel filled to overflowing with gold and silver. "Bhud is this all rale goold; I hope id won't turn to cockbo, and you'll give it all to me," exclaimed poor Paddy between doubt and joy. "Fool," said the leprechaun indignantly, "isn't my word

pledged, and do you imagine that like the vile sons of earth that the children of a brighter sphere will cheat and break promises when once that promise is given. 'Let me go,' and with a violent jerk he extricated himself from Paddy, and as rapid as thought, changed from the wrinkled old man to that of a young and fair formed, though still small and tiny being, and waving his hand at Paddy he said, 'you will be happy, but mind you must put the handsome Miss F. out of your mind,' and breaking a bramble from the dwarf alder bush, he struck Paddy a smart blow across the face which deprived him of sight for a few minutes, and when again he looked about him the leprechaun had vanished. The little cavern was still open and beneath the treasure shone up, dazzling the eyes of the bewildered Paddy. He stooped and gathered up some of the gold and silver with which he filled his pockets, and placing the cover on the earthen vessel covered it up with clay and moss and returned to his mother. The old woman started when she beheld him. 'Musha thin who are you,' she asked in surprise and fright, 'your face is the face of me own loved child. Your voice is the voice that used to gladden me ould heart, bhud he had a hump and was lame, and you are straight and clean limped.' Paddy in the joy of his heart never observed that the hump he had carried on his back for years—the result of a fall across a creepy stool when a child—had disappeared. His first act after becoming possessed of the crock of gold was to ask the hand of the lovely Kathleen F. in marriage, the request was complied with as old Mr. F. saw no other way to get out of the pecuniary difficulties that assailed him on all sides. A day was fixed for the nuptials which were to be solemnized with all pomp and ceremony. The day arrived that was to see the happy pair indissolubly united, but 'there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.' The bridegroom arrived early at the mansion of his intended father-in-law, his countenance radiant with smiles, and his person decked out with rich and expensive jewellery. On the route to the church, where the banns were to be celebrated the bridal party were disturbed by an old man not more than two feet in height who thrust his head into the carriage window. It was the wicked old leprechaun—'Paddy Kilfozey, you bruk your word, I told you to have nothing to do with the girl, but you would not take my advice you dirty, humpy ould sprishogue; she wouldn't look at you when you wor poor and sported the hump, but money alters people. I'm ashamed iv you Paddy, to say that you'd disgrace the ould stock iv Kilfozeys be joining the Crumwellians and denying your country and your religion.' 'Be off with you,' said Paddy, 'you sooty ould cobbler, how dare you presume to insult me, I'll rinse you in the gutther, you hop-o'-my-thump.' At Paddy's outburst of rage the manikin laughed, and with a well directed blow he hit Paddy a stroke of his tiny last on the back, and wonderful to relate there he was as of old, the original Paddy Kilfozey, hump-backed and lame. The occupants of the coach were horror stricken at witnessing the rapid and extraordinary transformation—the story may be briefly ended, Paddy was rudely hustled from the carriage by his aristocratic acquaintance, and he had to trudge home to his little cabin shadowed by the lofty Knockastia to reflect on the past. On inspecting his precious crock of metal he discovered that it was cockbo. He often sought the leprechaun afterwards to sooth his anger, but he never fell in with him again.

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### THE GAP OF THE WOOD.

THE Gap of the Wood is situated a mile south-east of Moate, on the road leading to Horseleap or Ardnurcher. There are many traditions extant about this locality. Some assert that there was an immense forest here in ancient times, and was destroyed

by the English invaders. My friend, the shoemaker, already alluded to, and to whom I am indebted for much valuable information, related to me the legend of

#### MURTY COGHLAN, THE OUTLAW.

"In the ould ainshint times when the people of the 'Gap' wor not as well versed in law as they are now, the whole country about the Gap, I'm tould, was a grate wood, full of wolves and other wild animals. Well, when the English thieves came over to rob us, they turned about and done what Julius Sazer done to themselves hundreds iv years afore that, they cut down every sprig, barrin' a few trees here and there. Well, at the time I'm spakin' iv, the Coghlan's, I often hard, wor a very powerful family altogether, an' owned a grate dale of land in Westmeath and King's County, partiklary about the movin' bog. They were fine rollickin' fellows, had plinty iv manes an' some to give away, an' sarra stranger ever left their house dry or hungry. Well, ruin an' misfortune kem on, the followers of Crumwell kem an' pillaged the Coghlan's, they hung some of thim and transported others, till the family wor near cleared out root and branch. At the time I'm spakin' iv, one mumber iv the family remained in the country—poor Murty. He was a fine strappin' boy, six feet two in his stockin' feet. He had no employment; the world was all afore him; he was too proud to work for those that plundered himself and his ancestors. To make a long story short, he wint over to France after the Wild Geese and jined the Frinch army, and distinguished himself at Fontenoy, where he helped to thrash his ould enemies under bloody Cumberland of Culloden infamy. For ten years he lived in France and took part in all the grate battles under ould Saxe till he riz to be a captain, an' med a good dale iv money. When Murty left Ireland he had no frind alive barrin' an ould aunt, and she was a widow, and she had an only son. Well, this son, like his cousin, was a fine boy. Of course he had nothing to do, an' he also was too proud to work for inferiors. Well, at that time, the people wor very fond of makin' poteen whiskey, an' fonder still iv drinkin' it. Smugglin', too, was goin' on at a grate rate, an' many people wid high heads wor consarned in it, an' very few cared to rob the Guvirmint in the revenues, so the result was that gangs iv hardy, hard-drinkin' chaps wor to be found in many parts about the country, partiklary near the sea coast an' the banks iv the Shannon.

"Well, Con or Condry Coghlan, the lad I'm talkin' about, jined one of the little bands iv outlaws who used to be carryin' on a trade with the French in wine an' brandy, an' he was so active that they med a leader of him. They wanted sich a leader—his grate popularity in that wild district secured for him a safe retreat for his men and his merchandise; and his resolution in danger an' headlong bravery in action were most necessary to men who had to evade the pursuit and frequently brave the attack of the sojers an' loyalists an' excisemen, with their train of spies and informers. Of course you often hard iv the Boor River, it runs west of Moate, into the Shannon. Well, young Condry had a swift little boat that he used to carry contraband goods from the Shannon that he used to get from the smugglers. Well, on the east bank in ould times there was a cave that used to hould the cargoes of the outlaws, but sarra sight of id is to be seen now bekase the loyalists destroyed it. The mouth of the cave was overflowed with water, and led by a gentle ascent to a vault strewn with the finest sand, and the interior received light and air from a fissure in the rock above, to which art had given a funnel-like shape. This cave was the boat's place of concealment, and this cave the safe retreat of Condry and his friends, and depository of their store, where they could set all the harpies of the law at defiance.

"At length poor Condry reached the end of his wild career. One night in the month of October he prepared to escort a quantity of French brandy



to Tullamore; two horses conveyed the liquor, and his party consisted of twelve stout fellows, who often before performed a service of danger. But a person in the confidence of one of the party, who got intimation of the midnight excursion, was induced, by hope of reward, to betray the route of the daring fellows to one Stephney, a notorious priest-hunter and loyalist, who fastened on the plunder of his Catholic neighbours. The road lay through a wild district, and upon arriving at a particular pass in which the road winded round a precipitous descent, where the rough rocks rose above, and a mountain torrent foamed and fretted its winding course below, the moon suddenly showed her round orb, emerging faintly, illuminating the waters of the little rivulet beneath, and revealing the persons of the outlaws to view. There was a human form observed to rise above the tall rocks that overhung the narrow way; he bore in his hand a long gun; his size appeared over the usual stature of men as he drew up his figure to its full length on the high cliff and bid the little band surrender in the king's name as traitors and papists. 'And who art thou,' said Condý, 'that presumest to address us in such audacious terms?' 'I am,' said he, 'a devoted servant of King George the Second, and I wish to apprise you of your present position; you are trading and trafficking with the king's enemies, the French; the road is lined with soldiers, your retreat is cut off, and you rush forward to certain destruction.' After a moment's consultation with his followers, Condý, in a clear manly voice, answered, 'We know the tender mercies of your king and his rascally Irish allies, and none of my party are cowards. We are all well armed, and the boldest of your soldiers may rue our unerring aim. At the worst it is but to die, and better to die like men than basely yield without a struggle.' 'Your blood then be upon your own heads, infatuated men,' said Stephney, retiring beyond the cliff. In proportion to the magnitude of their danger did the reckless bravery of the daring outlaws appear. They rushed forward with a wild and piercing shout in front of the horses, which might otherwise have served to screen them from the fire of the soldiery. The next brief moment brought them in view of the soldiers, who poured an ill-directed fire upon them, for not a man fell. Condý and his party fired in return, the soldiers recoiled—those pursued the advantage till the guns of the opposing parties met muzzle to muzzle. In that hour of strife the treacherous Stephney, who a moment before evinced so laudable an anxiety to prevent the flow of human blood, and who did not mingle in the fray, but lay crouched on the ledge of a rock, presented his long gun at the intrepid Coghlan, and fired with sure and murderous aim. The fatal ball pierced his side, and as he felt the mortal stroke he sprang from the ground to a considerable height, then descending in the struggle of death, he reeled to the earth, and as his head met the flinty rock, the butt end of a musket in some ruffian hand scattered the brains of the brave youth about. When his party saw their leader fall they resigned all thoughts of maintaining the fray; with one wild effort they broke through the enemy, and, escaping under favour of the night, left their leader and two others of their party dead, while the military had six killed and as many more desperately wounded.

"The remains of Condý were removed to his mother's house, and as the woe-struck woman poured her maternal despair over the body of her unfortunate son, in the Irish keen, which is usual on these mournful occasions, she prayed that the wild fox of the hill would lap up the heart's blood of the murderer of her son, and the raven of the valley flap its sable wings over his lifeless carcass.

"The dreadful imprecation reached the ears of the villain. Stephney, filled with cruel revenge, assembled a party that surrounded the house of the wretched woman, and set it on fire. As the flames rose through the roof, one, more compassionate than the rest, suffered the almost suffocated old woman to escape through a window. A cat was the only living thing that remained inside, and as the devouring flames cut off every place of refuge, the screams of the poor animal, which strongly resembled the shrieks



of human despair, were heartrending, and Stephney, mistaking them for the death cries of his human victim, ferociously exclaimed, 'Now the old witch will have time to curse in h—ll!'

At this stage of the story the manipulator of leather having refreshed himself with the contents of a pewter measure, and visited a waxey friend in Tay Lane, continued the narrative—

"Well, me tindher frind, a year after the burnin' and cowardly murdher of poor Condry, Murthy Coghlan, the Irish Brigademan, returned to Ireland, and his first bizness was to visit the scenes of his childhood, an' iv coorse he was grieved at what happened, an' he cursed by all the crasses in a Heelander's petticoat that he'd lave docthor's work on him. The usual mode of seeking satisfaction by duel was denied him, as there was an ould penal statute against sich things, and he being a Catholic of coorse, shut him out of all hope of redress, so he med up his mind to slay him even at the risk of his life. Murty watched for him night and day, an' one frosty night the cruel Orangeman was returning from Kilbeggan singing the favourite song of his party, 'Croppy, Lie Down,' when Murty kem up to him and ordered him to shut his mouth, an' if he iver larned a prayer in his life to offer it up, as he would show him no marcy. Cruel, cowardly, and shuperstitious Stephney looked on the stalwart figure of the avenger of Condry Coghlan with awe, and drawing a pistol from his pocket he discharged it at the head of his assailant, but Murty had the presence of mind to stoop, and the messenger of death passed harmlessly over him and lodged in an alder bush. In a moment Stephney was in the death gripe of Murty. In vain did the wretch crave for that which he denied to others—mercy! The struggle was of short duration, and in a few minutes the blood of his cousin, and the ruined homestead of his aunt was avenged. The following morning the body of Stephney was discovered lying in a dyke by the roadside and a half-starved looking dog lapping up his blood. Well, after the murder of Stephney the sogers and informers were at work to find out who kilt him, and iv coorse poor Murty had to clear out. So he started off, an' took up his abode on the banks of the Shannon in a big ruin of a house that answered well the retreat of one hunted by the Government spies. In this lonely spot Murty and a chosen band of frinds carried on a brisk bizness for a time tradin' with Frinch smugglers, an' this often afforded him a chance of making raids on the enemies of his country and his race. An', in justice to him, he never let an opportunity pass to thrash and fleece them.

"One winter's night the daring outlaw an' some friends were sitting before a snug fire countin' their profits and losses, whin a knock kem to the door. 'Bedad,' sed Murty, 'this looks quare, boys, to hear anyone knockin' or visitin' us, barrin' sogers or informers. Look to your arms, afeard iv a surprise or of treachery, an' in a loud voice axed who was there, and a voice answered—'a frind, a poor piper, that has lost his way, an' wants shelter. On the door being opened a middle-aged man entered, with his bagpipes. 'You are just the very fellow we want,' sed Murty, 'a little music will be a novelty to us. Sarra much music I hard since I left the Irish Brigade, barrin' the cries of our poor oppressed people. 'Jack,' said he to one of his followers, 'give him a drink of brandy, an get him his supper.' 'Murty Coghlan,' sed the piper, 'I kem here a long journey out of my way to sarve you. I owe a debt of gratitude to your family, for they sheltered and protected my father whin hunted down by the minions of tyranny. I come to warn you of danger. You are actually bought and sold, and at this very moment the bloodhounds of the butcher Cumberland are seeking you out. You are betrayed by a bosom frind, but a false one, the betrayer of your cousin Condry, and there he is at your right hand—Shawn Sheehan!

"The man referred to, on being accused of treason to his chief, fled into another apartment, bolted the door, and in about a minute afterwards a

pistol shot was heard—the scoundrel having committed suicide! On the door being forced the wretched fellow was discovered weltering in blood. On being searched the proof of his perfidy was found—the price of his treachery was wrapped up in a leather purse, and some letters that revealed his cowardice and meanness. ‘Come, boys,’ said the piper, ‘there is no time to be lost; the soldiers are on your track, and this minute they may not be a quarter of a mile away. They are led by a sure guide; so clear out of this.’ Scarcely had the piper concluded his warning when a violent knocking was heard at the outer door, and the musician with great presence of mind put Murty’s coat on him, and added—‘They will mistake me for you, an’ you may escape. As for me, I am tired of life, and care very little for prolonging it.’

“The soldiers on receiving no answer from the occupants within, forced the door; some shots were exchanged, and the intrepid piper fell, a pistol ball piercing his gallant heart. Overpowered by numbers, the outlaws fought bravely, but they were eventually captured, and led to the banks of the Shannon, where a British gunboat was anchored to receive them. They were heavily manacled and thrown into a corner, but luckily for Murty he wasn’t known, as the military thought they left him dead behind them in the ruined house. The gunboat, with the rapparees, steered for Limerick, but it had not proceeded far when it was overtaken by a French privateer and captured. The outlaws were safely conveyed to France, and it is needless to say, they never returned; they found a home and a grave far from the emerald isle.”

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### A PRIEST-HUNTER.

On the road leading from Moate to Horseleap there is a townland known as Newtown. In this locality there resided early in the last century a notorious priest-hunter and informer named L—. In 1703 the Whigs introduced into the Irish House of Commons a bill to prevent the further growth of Popery. This bill passed and obtained the royal assent on the 4th of March, 1704. To have this Act enforced with vigour a corps of informers was organised and subsidised, and the Commons resolved that the prosecuting and informing against priests should be an honourable service. There are many traditions of the scoundrel L— extant in the district, and his name is spoken of with detestation and horror by the peasantry. The priest-hunter was a furious fanatic, and in his features might be traced the malice of his mind. A fiend in human shape—lost to every generous feeling, and as insensible to pity and suffering as the lictor who lashed our Lord at the pillar. It was said that he had a wife and children, and such was the savageness of his nature that even on them he did not bestow ordinary affection.

“One holy Sabbath the Catholics had assembled, and were one by one proceeding to the lovely cave chapel, a retired spot where the holy sacrifice was offered up in the dark penal days, when the spy, with a number of accomplices, concealed himself at some distance, and there waited until the last of the worshippers had entered the cavern. He watched closely, but could not

see whether the priest was amongst them, for in those days the rude dress of the peasantry covered the person and concealed the character of him who might have spent many a happy year amidst high-minded and learned associates in the academic halls of Rome and Salamanca. Nor long did the priest-hunter wait, but, creeping from his lurking-place like a famished wolf on the trail, proceeded at once to the mouth of the cave, and, with loud shouts, commanded the bloody idolators to surrender the priest, but there was no reply. Entering the cave as far as daylight permitted, no sound came on his listening ear save the occasional fall of a water drop from the ceiling; still it was certain the victims were inside, and as the loud demand for their surrender were either not heard or not heeded, their persecutors proceeded to employ a mode of expulsion not unusual or extraordinary in those dreary days of our history. A large quantity of furze-faggots was pressed into the mouth of the cavern. Between that combustible heap and the outer entrance a wall of rubble stone was raised, the chinks and crevices of which were filled up with other loose brushwood. Then through a small aperture left for the purpose fire was introduced; the crackling element threw out large volumes of smoke, and fragments of the rock, split by fury of the flame, fell down and blocked up all chance of escape for those within. Eagerly did the priest-hunter listen, but no voice was heard from inside. Could there be any possibility of escape. One of the party was ordered to ascend the cliff and take a survey of the upper ground. He saw a volume of smoke rising out of a field at a short distance, and on reaching the spot found it to be an aperture in which he could trace the footmarks of persons as of coming up out of the cave. Disappointment seized him, and he hastened to inform the rest of the party of what he had seen. After a little observation the conviction of a sad failure dashed their spirits for the moment. The fire was allowed to burn itself out, and as they might now enter the cave without opposition or fear of danger, lights were procured, and in they moved to examine the retreat. After passing through several windings without meeting anything remarkable, they entered a spacious room, at one extremity of which appeared some articles on a projecting shelf of the rock. Approaching they found it was a rude altar, with candlesticks and chalice and missal, and the candles appeared as if recently extinguished. The minutest search revealed nothing else except the traces of many footsteps about the altar. At the time the effects of the fire began to be felt inside Mass had already been commenced, and the priest had arrived at that most solemn part of the sacrifice when he could not depart or cease. The congregation, feeling no such difficulty, fled, and saved themselves by the passage above the cliff. In their anxiety for the priest they urged him to fly with them, but he refused, and his escape was nothing short of a miracle."

Amongst the many priests hunted down by this merciless L—— was the Rev. James Dillon. In 1704 Father Dillon was registered at Mullingar as Popish priest (in the language of the penal statute) of Ardnorcher (Horseleap) and Kilbride. He was ordained at Ballyleoge, Co. Galway, in 1683, by Dr. Keogh, Bishop of Clonfert, lived at Moycashel the year of the registration, was then forty-five years of age, and had for sureties, in accordance with law, John Herald, of Kilbeggan, and Agbery Sheil, of Ballykilroe. According to the traditions of the people, this Father Dillon was a priest who suffered much for the faith. He lived in times when the priest was at the mercy of the common informer, and when betraying his whereabouts and leading to his arrest were deemed by an Irish Parliament honourable service. The law guaranteed protection to the



registered priests of 1704, but the law had no scruple in breaking faith when it was found that all its machinations to entrap these men into the oath of abjuration proved a signal failure. Of the fathers and guardians of the Irish Church of that day very few met with more unrelenting persecution than Father Dillon at the hands of L—— and his hireling gang. There are many dark stories handed down respecting the low devices of this vile tool of the Government, which he adopted to find out the hiding places of the Catholic clergy, and the lonely places where at day break they ventured to perform the sacred ceremonies. On one occasion he bribed a woman to induce her husband to feign sickness, had himself concealed in the house in order to see the priest administer the sacrament and thus have evidence against him. The unfortunate man consented, took to his bed, sent for the priest, but by a terrible retribution, when the priest arrived the man was dead. On another occasion he arrested Father Dillon as he was celebrating Mass, had him tied with ropes, and in this plight marched him to the gaol of Mullingar. Father Dillon took ill, and for some time his life was despaired of, and to this circumstance he was chiefly indebted for his subsequent liberation.

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#### KILCOMRERAGH.

THE south-east portion of Moate belongs to the parish of Kilcomreragh, commonly called Tubber or Kill. The abbey of Kilcomreragh was situated in the barony of Moycashel. It was founded by St. Colman, the son of St. Tinton, early in the seventh century. This St. Colman was the grandson of Filoga, prince of south Munster; his mother was Golges, daughter of Aedbfinn (Hugh the White), prince of Hybruinn. His brother was the celebrated St. Fursa or Fursey, who preached the gospel and founded churches and monasteries in England and France, and whose name is conspicuous amongst our continental missionaries. The name Colman being a diminutive of Colum or (Colin) a contraction of Columba, was very frequent amongst the early Irish saints. In the "Martyrology of Tallaght," the name occurs over eighty times. The feast of St. Colman of Kilcomreragh was celebrated here on the 28th of September. His history and year of his death is unknown. 757, Ferfio, a wise man, abbot of Kilcomreragh, died. The abbey seems not to have survived the Danish invasion. The ruins of the old church of Kilcomreragh measures in length 53ft. 4in. The walls have been for the most part torn down; and there is an air of holiness and desolation about this deserted sanctuary. Here sleep Dr. Geoghegan, late Coadjutor-Bishop of Meath, and



Rev. Messrs. M'Namee, and O'Leary. There is a monument to the Geoghegans of Ballybrickoge, with the following inscription—

Within these walls are buried  
The  
Geoghegans of Ballybrickoge,  
For whose souls you are desired to pray,  
May they rest in peace.  
Amen.

There was a holy well here called Tobar Amhaill (Saint Aved's Well), which was frequented on Good Friday. There was a church at a place called Kilcatherine; there was another in the last century at a place called Ballagh. The patron of Kill is St. Thomas, whose festival is held on the 21st of December. There is an immense ash tree on the townland of Kill-Murragh, convenient to which Mass was celebrated in the last century. It is still called the ash tree of the priests.

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#### KILMANAGHAN.

THE old church was uprooted and a Protestant edifice, now deserted, erected on the site. The patron saint of this church is St. Manchan.

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#### THE TROOPER'S MOUND.

TOURISTS travelling from Moate to Clara are shown a gentle eminence known as the Trooper's Mound, where it is said a Williamite soldier is buried in unhallowed ground. A huge rough stone marks the resting place of the dead warrior; and there are many traditions extant among the peasantry of the district relative to the career of him who lies unheeded in a lonely way-side grave. The untaught rustics of the surrounding county have ever regarded the vicinity of the mound as haunted ground, and many stories are in circulation about the freaks of the defunct hero; and his midnight wanderings, some times in the shape of a headless horseman, and occasionally assuming the form of a huge barrel rolling with terrible velocity along the high road leading to Tubber. During my residence in the neighbourhood, which was of a temporary character, I learned from an old "Sybil," Kitty Cuffe, the following particulars of the terrible trooper:—

"You must know, me dacent man, that the turrible trooper that is buried up there below, although some people say he was a furriner, an' came over from furrin parts, bhud it was no sich thing, he was a West of Ireland man,

an' iv course, lek others, he denied his country an' his creed, an' signs an id, sorra one is to say Lord have mercy on his sowl. Well, the sojer's name was Billy Gray, bekase I often heard me ould granny, Lord rest her sowl in glory, singing a song about him, bhud iv coorse I forget it all barrin' one verse—

I wonder much why Billy Gray  
Travelled so far to Moate Grenoge,  
From that enlightened town—Loughheagh—  
To learn to twang our Leinster brogue.

Well, Billy Gray was the son iv one iv the ould Crumwellian sojers that got some land in Galway that belonged to the Catholics. At the time my story begins he came to Moate to get larning, as the Quakers wor after establishing their quarters in the town, an' they opened out a great school altigether I'm towld. Billy remained in Moate a few years, an' bedad, whin the war bruck out what d'ye think bhud he jined the furrin invaydherers to cut our throats. He was at the battles of the Boyne, Athlone, and Aughrim. Well, whin the war ended he grabbed a lot of land about Moate, the King's County side, an' iv coorse he built a big house on it, an' thin he got married, bhud he had no childher to lave the fruits iv his robbery to. Aftther featherin' his nest he parsacuted all his poor Catholic naybors, in ivery way he could. He hung some, transported an' shot others, till he left the country waste. I'm towld that he used to dhrink very heavy, and that a quart iv sperrits wud be nothin' in his way; bhud he was near the end iv his tether, bekase as long as the pitcher is going to the well id's bruckat last. Billy was a great stockmaster, an' had any amount of horned cattle an' sheep, bhud one night he was expected home from Athlone, where he was after selling fat cattle for the sojers, an' iv coorse he had plenty iv money about him. Well, me jule, the lads iv course—I mane the rapparees—med a plan to meet him on his way home and to make him shell out. The boys met at a little sheebene-house kep be one Jack Slattery. It was one iv those wild nights in the month of December, win' an' rain that wudn't let a hen from undher a bush, an' the rafters cracked under the weight iv the savage storm, but sorra bit iv cowl reached the chaps, bekase they were well lined inside wid plinty iv potheen an' fine, juicy mutton, that the host had prepared for them from one of Gray's fat sheep. Warmed by the whiskey toddy, it was arranged to clane out Billy, root an' branch, out iv the country, by way iv satisfaction for all the wrong he had done. As midnight approached they left the cabin an' lay in ambush for their prey. They wor not long waitin' whin they hard the coach rowlin' up, an' one iv the party ordhered a halt, bhud the only answer given was the discharge ov a pistol, which slightly grazed the captain ov the rapparees. The shot roused the rage iv the little band, who attacked the coach wud great fury. Gray fought bravely, bhud it was no use; he was shot down, an' his sarvints showed a clane pair iv heels. As the coach was iv no use to the rapparees, they med a bonfire iv id, an' the horses wor sent to a place iv safety. The party then proceeded to the dwellinghouse iv the ould Crumwellian an' burned it to the ground. The next mornin' some sojers who wor on padrowl dug a a hole an' threw him into it, body an' bones. Well, from that blissed hour till up to a few days ago, a headless horseman used to be seen ridin' lek mad along the roads, an' sometimes he'd be lek an ould barrel rowlin' about till he was settled undher a bush there beyant, an' signs on id the same bush is beginnin' to decay. Well, Gray's frinds down in Loughrea wor so much afeerd that they niver looked aftther the troopers ill-gotten wealth."

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## TINAMUCK.

TINAMUCK, which in Irish means the house of the pig, lies to the south of Moate. The principal production of this enchanting region is lime, and from the many kilns at work strangers would fancy they were in the environs of Mount Etna. There is an old round tower here in excellent preservation, defying as it were nature and the elements. I was informed that it was repaired about eighty years ago by an antiquarian proprietor of the property, Mr. Holmes. On the occasion of my visit to Tinamuck I had the good fortune to fall in with an old native of the soil, Andy the lime burner. My new acquaintance was seated on a big stone in front of his kiln, humming a verse of a song in praise of a young lady whose acrobatic performance cast to the shade the renowned Blondin—

“ All from the summit  
Of a lofty turret  
I saw a maiden step gently down.”

After examining the ancient structure I intimated to Andy the opinions of Dr. Petrie, O'Donovan, and other eminent authorities, as to the origin and use of Round Towers, but he, good man, shook his head, and added, “ sorra hap'orth they know about id, no more than my coachman. Sure the first one ever built is jist where you see id. Maybe ye never hard how id was bilt at all,” I replied in the negative; and my kind guide, after expressing astonishment at my ignorance, proceeded to relate

## THE LEGEND OF TINAMUCK ROUND TOWER.

“ Whin the good St. Manchan was on earth, he lived about there, I'm towld; I suppose ye often hard iv him. I replied in the affirmative. Well, he was a grate saint altigedher; I'm towld he used to parform mighty miracles for the people; bhud one thing he failed at, he couldn't silence a woman's tongue, barrin' he make her a dummy. I often hard that whin he used to go out on dark nights to attend sick calls he had nothin' to do bhud howld up his five fingers, an' there they wor shinnin' bright, like so many blessed candles lightin' his way. The saint was a great preacher, and he used to be always advisin' the good wives iv the place, or rather the bad ones, how to live wid their nabors. 'Twas a funny world in his day; lashins to ate an' drink, an' nothin' to pay—neither rint, tithes, nor taxes; no bumbailiffs or sheriffs, landlords or agents.

“ Bhud to come to me story, in the ould ainshint times I'm spakin ov, there lived near where the ould round tower is now, one Malachy Kishoge; Malachy was a quiet sort ov man, bhud shure that was no thanks to him, becase he had to be quiet, as he was only nominal ruler ov his own house, his better half, Judy, was invested, or rather she invested herself, with absolute authority over her husband and her household. Malachy, besides tillin' a bit ov ground, risin' a few praties for the childer, used to be trainin' dogs I'm towld, an' brakin' in horses. His plan for reducin' wicked dogs was very simple an' chape, plinty ov exercise and hunger. He tamed the most

wicked horses, even ould garrons, bhud he could never subdue Judy—she was always at war wid her bridle—poor Malachy. As a last resoorse Malachy applied to the saint for advice an' assistance how to act. Afther he hard his story he shook his head, an' sez he, 'You must trust to ould age, Malachy avick, for comfort an' consilayshin, bekase ould age makes people bothered, an' thin ye can't hear what she siz to you.' 'An' ye tell me, father jule, that I'll have no pase till thin.' 'I'm afraid not,' said he, 'barrin' I work a miracle on her, an' if she brings me heavy hand on her, pon me sowkins she'll mind id all the dear days ov her life; go home Malachy an tell Judy what I sed, an' iv she doesn't mind herself I'll lave her where her naybor's dog wont bite her.' The poor man returned home, joy beamin' in his face, his step was light, an' carriage erect. He had obtained a powerful ally to aid him in any offensive movement against Judy. On reaching the little hamlet where he lived he heard Mrs. Kishoge's sweet voice reverberatin' over the dreary waste of bog that lay in front of his cabin, like a fire-bell, scoldin' one ov her naybors. 'What's the manin' ov all this,' axed Malachy, 'is your tongue never to saze, night, noon, or mornin'. 'Whist you dirty ould sprishogue, who gev you lave to talk, iv you don't shut your mouth I'll stuff id wid the dishcloth,' so with that she gave him a dab ov a washstaff that nearly knocked the sowl-case out ov him. 'Take that now,' she sez, 'an' buy brogues for id.' 'Ah, you wicked jade,' bawled Malachy, 'this is the last blow ever you'll give me never fear, I'll jist step over to Father Manchan an' tell him ov your doings, he's the boy that'll gag you, throth he'll put a pitch plaster on your mouth.' 'Go along you ould informer,' sez Judy, 'shure the bad dhrop is in you. I don't care three rattles ov a tinker's praskeen about you or him.' Malachy darted off as fast as his legs could bring him, till he reached the house of the holy abbot, and told him what happened. 'You needn't say a word more,' sez the saint, 'so go home an' I promise you you'll get ease and pase for a long time.' Kishoge returned home with a light heart, he was to be a free man again. The followin' mornin' whin he got up Judy was nowhere to be seen, he sarched for her up and down, bhud no one saw her. In the coorse ov the day a naybor ov Malachy's rambled into him, 'Arrah, Malachy,' sez he, 'you're a quare man to be sittin' here an' all the country runnin' to see the miracle was performed last night. Sorra such a buildin' iver you seen as ruz up out ov the ground last night.' The promise ov the saint and the absence of Judy struck Malachy, an' he knew the story of the buildin' had somethin' to do with it, so off they started, an' what do ye think bhud about half a mile from Malachy's cabin there stood the round tower jist as it stands now, idouth house or home near it, an' who do ye think was inside id, peepin' out of a place ov a windy or doorway, bhud Judy Kishoge, lookin' out jist like a cow out ov a pound, an' sorra one she had to spake to but the jackdaws an' sparrows that wor flyin' about the buildin', and wonderin' at id. 'The top ov the mornin to you,' sez Malachy, 'bedad ye have a very high trastle to your door,—bekase the place ov the door was thirty feet from the ground—'you'll keep airly hours now, you can't be streelin' about now, backbitin' and abusin' the naybors; would you have time to take a half one.' 'Go along wid ye,' sez Judy, 'you hatchet faced lookin' hangman, wait till I go home, throth you may be makin' yourself scarce.' 'If you don't come home soon,' retorted Malachy, 'I suppose you'll write.'

"Well, to cut short me story, the saint kep' her there for a couple ov months, on small allowance, till he had her tamed, an' thin, ov coorse, he let her back, an' durin' the remaindher ov her life, I am towld, she was a model of propriety an' decorum for all the good wives ov the parish. Well, I often hard that Judy's imprisonment had a grate effect on all the wicked women in the district; any ov them that was up for bein' quarrelsome you had only to threaten the round tower on thim. Well, whin the news spread over the country about the Taming ov the Shrew of Tinamuck, round towers were bilt in every part ov Ireland as female penitentiaries, an' they wor far better than either Grangegorman or Tullamore. So, dipind on it, sir, that the story



ov Dr. Pether, or whatever you call him, about round towers being built by our Pagan ancesthers for their Pagan rites, or warnin' towers, is all bosh. The first of them was built for Judy Kishoge."

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#### BISHOP GEOGHEGAN AND THE ROBBER.

Dr. Eugene Geoghegan, Coadjutor-Bishop of Meath, was born in the neighbourhood of Tubber, and belonged to the old race of Moycashel—the famous M'Geoghegans—which once held unbounded sway over a large portion of the present Westmeath and King's County. Very little is known of his early history, further than that he studied on the Continent, was a very eminent man, became parish priest of Tubber, and lived in his parish on a little farm of ten acres, on the townland of Ballybeg. The days of Dr. Geoghegan's episcopacy were however short, and his death was accelerated by an accident, for which he was not responsible, but which, naturally enough, gave him a shock from which he never afterwards recovered. It seems that Dr. Geoghegan, after a lengthened absence, performing visitation of the diocese, had returned home to Ballybeg. At that time a band of notorious robbers, headed by a man named Mick Allard, a daring outlaw, and a native of Rathconrath, infested the country, and plundered indiscriminately through Westmeath and King's County. The rendezvous of the gang was on the northern bank of the little lake situated at the rere of Mount Dalton. To a person interested in wild and picturesque scenery I don't know any part of Westmeath better adapted for desperadoes than this secluded spot. In a deep glen, sheltered on every side by low hills, and flanked by a rushing rivulet, was the outlaws' home. The situation chosen by the band was undoubtedly convenient and romantic, and was a safe cover for plunder and shelter.

It was a wild night in the month of December, 1774; the flood-gates of heaven poured their torrents, the wind rushed angrily through the still darkness, and the lightning glanced along the air. A gang of desperate men had assembled in the sheeling on the lonely bank of the little lake, whose waters were lashed to fury by the pitiless elements without. Though the frail rafters creaked beneath the weight of the savage wind, and the lofty ash trees groaned in the elemental war, and the echoes from the neighbouring cliffs bore to the ear the hollow roaring of the foaming rivulet adjacent, the tempest had no terror for the highwaymen—

"The storm without might rave and rustle,  
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle."

After food and drink had been distributed among Allard's followers, it was arranged that Dr. Geoghegan's house should be robbed that night, as the storm was favourable for such a

rash enterprise. Lots having been cast, it fell to Allard to break into his lordship's house, which was a small one, on the borders of the King's County. The journey from Rathconrath to Ballybeg was a long one, but the outlaws knew every pass in the country. On sped the desperadoes, across Sugar Hill and the marshy land lying north of Loughnavally and the bog of Carne, till lofty Knockastric was reached. They entered on a dark mountain pass, enclosed on either side by precipices, which rose to an awful height above them, in the dim, starless sky. The terrific rage of the storm, added to the dead of night, the wild hill, and its numerous legends of ghosts, had a strange effect on the heart of Allard, who was cruel, cowardly, and superstitious; and more than once the robber quailed, but his comrades encouraged him on with deep draughts of poteen, made on the bog of Killahee. Everything favoured the plan of the miscreants, for the curate, on the return of the bishop, got leave of absence to visit his friends, and no one slept in the house unless Dr. Geoghegan and his aged housekeeper. On arriving at Ballybeg the robbers blackened their faces, and it was arranged that Allard should break in and open the door for the rest. A stone flung through the window hit the post of the bed in which Dr. Geoghegan was sleeping, awoke him, and when he rose to ascertain the cause, he saw a robber with a hatchet in his hand, attempting to force his way through the window. The bishop asked him what brought him there; the ruffian, who was supported on the shoulders of his companions, averted his face, took more drink, and continued to force himself through the window. The bishop remonstrated with him, threatened, but all to no purpose. Now, in the room there was an old rusty gun, which Dr. Geoghegan had in his hands that day while walking through the little farm, and in which there was an old charge that he had frequently attempted to fire off, but when remonstrance failed with the robber, the bishop took the old gun in his hands and presented it at the intruder. More drink was given to the housebreaker, the bishop placed his finger on the trigger and pulled it. The charge went off, the robber reeled, his companions ran away, and Allard fell from the window to the ground a corpse. Dr. Geoghegan never recovered this accident. He fretted and pined away at the thought of having been instrumental in sending a soul so sudden before its Creator. Dr. Geoghegan departed this life on the 26th of May, 1778, and was buried with his friends in the old churchyard of Kilcomreagh. A headstone has the following inscription:—

Here lyeth the body of the late  
 Rev. Dr. Owen Geoghegan,  
 Who departed this life  
 26th May, 1778, aged 72 years :  
 May the Lord have mercy on his soul, and on  
 The soul of his family,  
 Who are also interred here.

On the news spreading over the country that the humble mansion of Bishop Geoghegan had been attacked by the Rathconrath freebooters, the people were so indignant that they drove them from their lurking place, and forced them to fly to another part of the country. Some of the gang took up their abode at Raheenwoe, between Churchtown and Loughnavallay, and for years they were the terror of travellers, as it was the high road to the west of Ireland. Old people assert that the barony constables, who were the only peace officers at the time, were in league with them, and shared a part of the booty.

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#### BALLINABARNA.

BALLINABARNA, the town of the "bearná," or gap, is situated a short distance south of the Chapel of Rosemount. There is an old fort in the locality, and like similar mounds throughout the country, if the stories of the peasantry who reside there are true, is tenanted by fairies, and their midnight cantrips are often told around the fireside, on the long winter evenings.

"In the good old days, before the Crimean War, when whiskey was at three pence a naggin, there was a wayside tavern in Ballinabarna, kept by an old woman, whom, for private reasons, I shall call Molly. Molly was kind and hospitable to thirsty travellers, and the general public, and, like the renowned Madame Blaize, all tipplers were freely regaled, provided they left a substantial pledge behind in lieu of the alcohol or 'cut-throat,' as she used to call it, from its strength and pungency. Poor Molly had one failing, a weakness to pry into futurity, and to know what fate had in store for herself and her neighbours. The result of her prying inquisitiveness was that her establishment was frequently visited by venerable dames, who did a brisk trade tossing cups, revealing to their dupes their future destiny in the Lottery of Life. As a general rule those who drank freely, and bribed the old hags with silver, were to be blessed with long life, wealth galore, peace and plenty, whilst the niggard should travel in search of riches to furrin land, and not get it, and to be afflicted with all the ills that flesh is heir to. Whenever an old sybil of profound knowledge notified her intention of visiting the tavern, the house was sure to be crowded with lady customers, and Molly, in slang phrase, pushed a roaring trade. At the period I am speaking of, there came to the little hamlet a gentleman versed in the occult sciences—a walking prophet—a regular soothsayer—who cast to the winds cup-tossing and cup-tossers, in the person of a mute, or as they are called, a dummy. The new arrival was graciously received by Molly and her customers, and after a couple of days he had lots



of clients, who placed implicit confidence in his artful predictions, and amongst the rest the worthy vintress. After the usual mysterious signs, he informed Molly in writing that there was an iron chest of gold buried in the fort, that it was guarded by a black cat, that a life would be lost in obtaining it, but that through his (the dummy's) intervention that calamity would not occur, and that the sooner the men would commence excavating the better. The extraordinary intelligence was circulated over the parish of Kill, and numbers of men assembled to dig for the hidden treasure. The work of delving went on, and Molly supplied the toilers with the sinews of war—cut-throat. For five days the noise of pickaxe, crowbar, and spade was unceasing. Still no appearance of treasure-throve. On the sixth evening, when wearied and exhausted, it is alleged, the men heard a rumbling noise beneath them, and on a sudden the ground opened, and out popped, not a black cat, but a ferocious-looking rat, of raven hue. Alarmed and terrified, the men sought safety in flight, helter-skelter. The retreat from Bull's Run was nothing to it. The following morning the dummy appeared on the scene, and after being informed, in writing, of what had happened, he declared that the spell was broken, and that the gold had been removed to another place through the agency of the black rat, who was guarding it, but that he would find out where it had been removed to. The same evening the dummy was closetted with Molly in her reception room, and after casting the horoscope of her destiny, he made known to her that she was to be the fortunate possessor of the iron chest and its precious contents; but she should keep the affair a secret—the chest had been changed to another place by the wily fairies. It was under a white-thorn bush, at the south side of the fort, and the hour to dig for it was the witching one of midnight, when the good people would be out on their rambles. That night Molly was at the bush denoted, accompanied by her servant-maid, and armed with a loy or spade, and a drop of cut-throat to nerve her on, but melancholy to relate, instead of thrusting the spade into the ground the unfortunate old woman struck the left ankle a violent blow, and her screams resounded over the wild expanse of country, to the great horror and dismay of many of her neighbours, who heard her shrieks of agony. I am told that she never recovered the injury, but after that she lost all faith in fortune-tellers of every description. The large hole excavated remains open to the present day, and no one could be found since that time courageous enough to seek further for the hidden treasure. I may state, the dummy cleared out of the place at once."

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The population of Moate in 1881 amounted to 1,462. The population in 1841 was 1,785. During the war of the Revolution a large body of the adherents of James II., which had been pursued from Ballymore by the forces under De Ginckle, drew up here in order to give battle to their pursuers; but they were driven into the town, whence, after they had vainly endeavoured to entrench themselves, they fled to Athlone, with the loss of about 300 men, several officers, their baggage, a great quantity of arms, and 500 horses. On their arrival at Athlone their defeat had caused such consternation in the garrison of that place that the gates were closed against the fugitives from a fear of admitting their pursuers also, and several fled for shelter to the bogs, and many perished in the river. The manufacture of cottons, linens, and tweeds, formerly carried on here to a great extent, is a thing of the past. The parish of Moate or Kilcleagh, comprises 9,237 statute acres, and the population of the entire parish in 1841 numbered 6,160.

Castledaly lies two miles west of Moate. The Dalys, former owners of this place, were an old Irish family, and held their estates without patent until Charles the Second's time, when they obtained one as innocent Papists. They conformed to Protestantism during the reign of Queen Anne. Castledaly is in other hands at present.

Ballinahowen lies about three miles south-west of Moate, on the road leading from Athlone to Parsonstown. It was for more than nine centuries the residence of the Malone family, whose ancient mansion, built on the site of an old castle, was formerly an object of interest to tourists. The estate and old family mansion was purchased by the late Sir John Ennis, and is at the present in possession of Madame O'Donohoe.

THE END.



## KILBEGGAN AND ITS ENVIRONS.

**K**ILBEGGAN, one of the chief towns of Westmeath, is situated on the Upper Brosna, and lies about twelve miles south of Mullingar. The river here is small, bearing only the surplus waters of Lough Ennel, but it is considerably increased in volume by the supplies it receives from the boggy tract it runs through before it reaches the Shannon. The town contains the usual public buildings. To the north, as far as the shores of Lynn Lake, the country is generally flat, boggy, and in many places injured by the overflowing of the Brosna. Prior to the fatal Act of Union, Kilbeggan was a borough, and returned two members to the Irish House of Commons. At the General Election in 1789 the people of Kilbeggan returned as their representatives the incorruptible and uncompromising John Philpot Curran and Henry Flood. In 1800, Sir Francis Hopkins, one of its members, received a bribe in money for vacating his seat and letting in a unionist; and Gustavus Lambert, the proprietor, received £15,000 compensation for his perfidy. Kilbeggan was in olden times the chief town of M'Geoghegan's country, and there were two religious establishments here—one an Abbey, founded by St. Beccan, a cotemporary of St. Columbkille in the latter end of the sixth century, or early in the seventh; but the records have been lost in the night of time, or have perished in the early invasions which have swept over Ireland.

In the year 1200 another religious establishment, called "The Abbey of the River of God" (why so called I have not ascertained), was founded by the D'Alton family, lords of Rathconrath, under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. It was supplied with monks from the great Abbey of Mellifont, whose mitred abbot could ride straight forward on lands belonging to his house from the sea near Drogheda to the Shannon. In the reign of Elizabeth a branch of the Dillon family had the property of the suppressed abbey. In the following reign Oliver Lord Lambert was seized of the monastery lands of the Blessed Virgin.

The "Four Masters" has the following:—

"About the year 1200 a Cistercian monastery was erected here called 'The River of God,' by the D'Alton family, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, which was supplied with monks from the far-famed Abbey of Mellifont. In 1213 Melaghlín M'Coughlan, Prince of Delvin, died during his pilgrimage to this abbey. 1218—Roderick and Melaghlín, sons of M'Coughlan, died in this abbey. Same year, O'Nive, Abbot of Kilbeggan, died. (Annals of Kilrohan.) 1236—Hugh O'Malone, Bishop of Clonmacnoise, died here. 1298—The Abbot, William O'Flynn, was made Bishop of Clonmacnoise, and died 1202. (Annals of Loughkee—MacGeoghegan)."

The last Abbot of Kilbeggan was Maurice O'Shaughane, and on the 30th of November, 31st King Henry VIII., he and his community were ejected from their cloister, and all the property of the monastery and the church, the Catholic endowments of past ages, the sacred trust for the widow and the orphan, for the decency and splendour of public worship, were grasped by sacriligious frauds, and were squandered on the brutal passions of an impious king, or went to subsidise the agents of the Reformation. King James I. granted the site and all the landed property of the monastery to Sir Oliver Lambert, by whom, it is said, the walls of the monastery were pulled down. The site of the once famous monastery is now a green field. There were two churches here—the Abbey Church and the Parochial Church. The one is represented by a green mound, called “The Church of the Relic,” and the other by the present Protestant edifice. All ancient traces of Catholicity have been swept away, so that not a vestige remains unless the emblem of salvation on the modern tombstones.

#### RATHUGH.

RATHUGH, anciently called Rath-Aodha-Bree, the Rath or Fort of Hugh, the son of Bree, is situated in the barony of Moycashel, about three miles east of Kilbeggan. A monastery was founded here in the sixth century, inside a rath or fort, by St. Aodh, or Hugh, who was born in this neighbourhood, and whose memory, notwithstanding the lapse of time, is still held in extraordinary reverence among the people. The “Four Masters” has the following notices of this Abbey :—

“771—Ferbaso, Abbot of Rathugh, died. 783—Dubhdathuath, Bishop and Abbot of Rathugh, died. 837—In this year the ‘Four Masters’ record a meeting of the Irish chieftains convened at Rathugh, by Malachy, monarch of Ireland, for the purpose of establishing peace and concord among the various tribes. Of the ecclesiastics who attended mention is especially made of Fethgna, the Primate of Armagh, and Snairleach, Abbot of Clonard. The monastery of Rathugh seems not to have survived the Danish invasion.”

The Appendix to the Introduction of the “Martyrology of Donegal” contains the following notice of this place :—

“Aodh MacBrie, MacCorbmaie, MacCremhthainn, MacFiachach, from whom the Cinel Fiachach was born in Cillair (Killare); his miraculous staff, made of brass, inlaid with silver, is in the possession of Peter MacEoghagain, Rath-Aodh; a parish church still remains there. It was he himself—viz., Peter MacEoghagain—who found the staff; and Cillair is still the church of St. Aodh. St. Patrick foretold his descent from Fiachach, when he gave him fifteen townlands around Cillair (Killare), after cursing the stones of Uisnech, that they should not take hold together.”

The Abbe MacGeoghegan, in his History of Ireland, alludes to the meeting of Irish princes at Rathugh—“Malachi, seeing

two barbarous nations contending about a country to which neither had a right, thought it time to stop their progress, and for this purpose he convened an assembly of the princes and nobles at Rath-Aodh, now Rath-Hugh, in the territory of Kinel Fiachach, in Westmeath, in which regulations were made relative to the state of affairs; the princes who had been at variance were reconciled, and all appeared disposed to defend the common cause."

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### ST. AODH (OR HUGH'S) STONE.

THERE is an old tradition in the locality that St. Hugh was accustomed to pray at this stone, and when stations were formerly held here, the people, after performing their devotions at the stone next visited the Holy Well. The Rev. Dean Cogan, in his "Diocese of Meath," describes St. Aodh's (or Bishop Hugh's) Stone, and Holy Well, in the field adjoining the churchyard of Rahue, and the places where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered in penal times, together with the outrages inflicted on the religious feelings of the people in 1788, and a remarkable "bulla," or medal, and stone, found in the Abbey ground of Kilbeggan, in 1857:—"I paid a visit to Bishop Hugh's Stone, and had the moss cleaned off that had thickly grown on it. The stone itself is nearly square, and a deep line runs round within about two inches of the edge. The surface is very irregular; it does not appear ever to have been polished. A cross in a circle is deeply cut on the surface. The arms of the cross terminate in outer lines; in the centre of the cross there is a deep circular cavity, about six or seven inches in diameter. There is a smaller cavity at the intersection of one of the arms of the cross. This large cavity, which is about an inch and a-half deep at the centre, may have given rise to the legend which represents it as having been formed by Bishop Hugh's knees. In latter times people used to go to the stone to be cured of headache."

At a short distance from the site of the old monastery there is a Holy Well, called Bishop Hugh's Well. It is now closed up; it is on the old Abbey grounds. Stations were held there annually on 2nd November, and that day was always observed as a holiday by the people till about thirty-five years ago.

There is still a tradition in the neighbourhood that a person named Ranell, who rented the Abbey lands from the L——s, having caused the tokens to be collected after a station, and to be thrown into the fire in his presence, was found dead in his chair before they were consumed. This man's tombstone, and that of his only daughter, who died unmarried, are still in good preservation in the churchyard. I should have stated that I could not discover the slightest trace of any inscription on Bishop Hugh's stone.



The memory of the L—— family is execrated by the people of the parish, and according to all accounts, deservedly so. Several priests are said to have been hanged by members of this house, and others are said to have been persecuted and imprisoned. One of those priest-hunters was shot, and thus fell a victim to the vengeance of the people; another became mad; a third broke his neck; and a fourth died a more inhuman death. In the parish of Rahugh Mass used to be celebrated in the last century at Knockbo and Kiltubber, near the chapel of Rahugh, and in the parish of Kilbeggan; and at Cruckanvara, within the townland of Kilbeggan; and at Commagh, on the north bank of the Brosna, within a short distance of the town.

During the terrible period of '98 a detachment of the Northumberland Fusiliers, under Captain Thatcher, arrived, and was stationed in Kilbeggan in '98. There was also a local corps of yeomanry, under Captain Berry, stationed here at the same time. The latter asked permission of Thatcher to set fire to the chapel whilst the people were at Mass. They rode up to the chapel with drawn swords for that purpose, but Thatcher would not consent till the congregation left. The chapel was ultimately spared.

When Lord Cornwallis was passing through Kilbeggan the chapel was taken possession of by his men, who burned the pews, and at their departure a large plaster figure of the Redeemer was found with a deep cut, as if by a sabre, across the throat. It remained in that state till the old chapel was removed to make room for the present one, about 1805.

There were several Orange scoundrels in Kilbeggan in 1793, who availed themselves of the disturbed state of the country to plunder and massacre their Catholic neighbours. One of them, named J—— C——, boasted that he had shot down in cold blood "nine bloody Papists;" and a fiendish woman, wife to T—— G——, shot a poor labourer as he was on his way to Kilbeggan for a midwife to attend his wife in her confinement!

There are many traditions extant of the cruelties practised on the people of this district during the dark Penal Days by the privileged and licensed friends of the Government.

A medal, made of lead, and about the size of a crown-piece, was discovered in the Abbey lands of Kilbeggan some years ago. On one side, in raised letters, is the following inscription:—

Gregory XI., P.P.  
Pope Gregory was created Pontiff  
About 1370.

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SIR THOMAS CUFFE.

PREVIOUS to the introduction of railways Kilbeggan was a town of considerable importance, and the direct route to Galway,

Athlone, and Ballinasloe, from Dublin. Lady Cuffe's inn was the resort of the aristocracy during the latter part of the last century and commencement of the present one; and there are many anecdotes about the tourists who visited this famous establishment. During the Viceroyalty of Lord Townshend that nobleman visited Kilbeggan, and short as his stay was, he immortalized the inn and its proprietor.

"Lord Townshend's Viceroyalty," writes the biographer of Charlemont, "forms a peculiar epoch in the history of this country. A gallant soldier, the military associate of Wolf, frank, convivial, abounding in wit and humour—sometimes, it is said, more than was strictly consonant to the Viceregal dignity—capricious, uncertain, he not unfrequently offended the higher orders."

This statement is not to be wondered at, as Plowden states that he was sent to Ireland "to break up the mischievous system of the Irish oligarchy." And he adds, "to be really powerful, Lord Townshend felt that he should be first popular; he spared no pains or cost to earn the character of a right good fellow, and if some disliked his politics, all liked him for his hospitality."

Some assert that the Viceroy was a man of dissolute habits, who, surrounded by companions as abandoned as himself kept the metropolis in a blaze with their buffooneries and extravagances, and their exploits were duly recorded by the satirical writers of the day. Lord Townshend, accompanied by four kindred spirits, during one of his excursions to the west, claimed the hospitality of plain, honest John Cuffe, the Kilbeggan innkeeper, and had his claim allowed. It was a godsend to the humble owner of the modest wayside inn to have such distinguished visitors and lodgers under his roof; and it is almost needless to say that he treated the semblance of royalty right royally, and the Viceroy, in the exuberance of generosity, conferred the honour of knighthood on the unassuming Tom in recognition of the kindness he and his friends had received. Never did the Fountain of Honour play off so ridiculous a prank as when it showered its spray on the head of an innkeeper.

In those days whiskey was better than it is now, and the contents of Cuffe's cellar was all that could be desired—so much so, that it had pleased His Excellency's palate, and the good man, whilst in a half-drunken state, requested to see his kind host, who had provided such good things for the noble party. Cuffe, on making his appearance, was complimented by the great man, after which he ordered him to kneel down, and taking a sword, he flourished it over the head of Cuffe, exclaiming, "Rise up, thou mirror of innkeepers, and be henceforth Sir Thomas Cuffe!" The astonishment of the innkeeper may be well supposed, as he returned to his wife to inform her of the title conferred.

The Viceregal party, as usual, retired to rest well saturated with whiskey punch, and utterly reckless and regardless of what had

happened, and rose in the morning forgetful, till reminded of the transaction, at which he was not a little annoyed. But, plucking up courage, he said to his aide-de-camp, "It certainly was carrying the joke too far, but curse the fellow, sure he will not take any advantage of it. Call him before me, and I'll persuade him to hush up the matter." Accordingly the man was introduced.

"Mr. Cuffe," says His Excellency, "a circumstance occurred last night which I am sure you understand in its proper light. It was, it is true, carrying the joke too far. I hope, sir, you feel as becomes you, and that you will say no more about it, nor let the thing get wind."

"Oh, indeed, my lord, the honour you have conferred on me, though I am right sensible of its importance, is still what I, for one, would have no objection to forego, under a proper consideration; but, please your lordship, what will my Lady Cuffe say?"

The innkeeper and his wife were Sir and Madame all their lives. Some say that Lord Townshend gave them a large sum of money to abandon the title. Lady Cuffe survived the knight some years, and many tourists visited Kilbeggan for the purpose of seeing the recipient of Viceregal honors.

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#### DURROW.

DURROW is a parish partly in the barony of Moycashel, Westmeath, but chiefly in that of Ballycowan, King's County. Durrow was in ancient times called Dearmagh, which means the Plain of Oaks. St. Columba erected a monastery here about the year 550, and it continued afterwards during his whole life one of his favourite places.

Adamnan has the following :—

"A monastery, which in Scotia is called Dearmagh (the Latin equivalent, *Robæti Campus*, the Plain of the Oaks), was erected about the middle of the sixth century."

Bede also gives both the Irish name and the translation in the following passage :—

"Before he (Columba) passed over into Britain, he had built a noble monastery in Ireland, which, from the great number of oaks, it is in the Scotian language called Dearmagh, the Field of the Oaks."

It is hardly necessary to remark that the name had been in use ages before St. Columba, who adopted it as he found it, and it has been softened down since to its present name.

The site of the monastery was granted to St. Columba by Brendan, Chieftain of Teffia. Before St. Columba departed from Ireland he spent some months at Durrow, then governed by St. Lasren, and during his retirement he drew up rules and

instructions for the future guidance of this house. His memory was cherished and commemorated here with special reverence, and to this day the parish is under the patronage of St. Columba.

In the "Annals of the Four Masters" we have the following notices:—

"585—Breannin, Lord of Teffia, died. It was he that had, some time before, dedicated Dhearmagh to God and to Columbkille. 758—Donell, Monarch of Ireland, died. He was the first King of Ireland of the Clann Colmain, and was buried at Durrow with honour and veneration. 786—Cinaedh, Abbot of Durrow, died. 806—Blathmac, Abbot of Durrow, died. 827—Aedhan, Scribe of Durrow, died. 832—A great many of the family of Clonmacnoise were slain by Phelim, King of Cashel; and all their termon was burned by him to the door of the church. In like manner did he treat the family of Durrow. 835—Searghus, Abbot of Durrow, died. 839—Crunnmael, Primate of Durrow, died. 848—Tuathal, Abbot of Baichrainn (Lambay) and Durrow, died. 931—Seachnasch, priest of Durrow, died. 948—Scuithine, Abbot of Durrow, died. 971—Maemoire, Abbot of Durrow, was drowned in Eas Ruaidh. 1010—Dubtach, Airchineach of Durrow, died. 1022—Flann Ua Tacain, Airchineach of Durrow—a distinguished wise man—died. 1038—Aihill O'Gair, Lector of Durrow, died. 1059—A victory was gained by Connor O'Melaghlin, Prince of Tara, over the Danes and Leinstermen, at Durrow of Columbkille. 1068—Murrough O'Brien, grandson of Brian Borhuma, and Royal Heir of Munster, was slain by the men of Teffia, in revenge of their having been plundered and preyed upon, and his head was taken to Clonmacnoise and his body to Durrow. 1077—Murrough O'Nuaat, a learned Senior of Durrow, died. 1103—Ua Cingeadh (now called King), Lector of Durrow, died. 1129—Gilda Connan O'Kelly, a noble priest of Durrow, died. 1137—More, daughter of King Murtagh O'Brien, and wife of Murtagh O'Melaghlin, King of Meath, died in Durrow, after penance. 1149—Eodhaidh O'Kelly, chief head of the men of Meath, the most distinguished bishop in all Ireland, died at an advanced age at Durrow. 1153—Murrough O'Melaghlin, King of Tara and Meath, and its dependant districts of Aingilla, and (for a time) of the greater part of Leinster—flood of the glory, magnificence, and nobility of Ireland—died at Durrow. 1154—Durrow was burned this year. 1155—Durrow was twice burned in one month this year. Same year O'Melaghlin, King of Meath and of the greater part of Leinster, died in the thirtieth year of his age, from the effects of taking a poisonous drink, at Durrow, in the flood of his prosperity and reign, on the night of the festival of St. Bridget, after the victory of penance. 1173—Donnell O'Melaghlin, King of Meath, was slain by his stepbrother at Durrow. 1186—Hugh de Lacy, the profaner and destroyer of many churches, lord of the English of Meath, Breffny, and Oriel, he to whom the tribute of Connaught was paid, he who had conquered the greater part of Ireland for the English, of whom the English castles in Meath from the Shannon to the sea were full, after finishing the castle of Durrow, set out, accompanied by three Englishmen, to view it. One of the men of Teffia, a youth named Gilla-gan-Inatha O'Meyey approached him, and drawing out his axe, which he had kept concealed, he, with one blow of it, severed his head from his body. This was in revenge of Columbkille."

It may not be out of place here, perhaps, to remark that in the present century a somewhat similar disaster occurred at Durrow, when its proprietor, the Earl of Norbury, was assassinated by an unknown hand, after he had completed a castle on the site of that erected by De Lacy, and, as some would think, after having insulted Columbkille, by preventing the families of his tutelage from burying their dead in the ancient cemetery of Durrow.



"Gilla-gan-Inatha fled, and, by his fleetness of foot, escaped from the English and Irish to the wood of Kilclare. He afterwards went to Sinnagh (the Fox) and O'Brien, at whose instigation he had killed the Earl 1190—Dermot O'Rafferty, Abbot of Durrow, died. 1213—The Castle of Durrow was finished this year. 1448—Dermot, the son of Owen, son of Mahon O'Daly, Ollay of all Meath, a learned poet, died, and was interred in Durrow. 1451—Farrell Oge Roe Mageoghegan, a captain of great repute and celebrity, was killed and beheaded at Croughool, by the son of the Baron of Delvin, and the grandson of Pierce Dalton of Rathconrath. They carried his head to Tara, and from thence to Dublin, for exhibition. It was afterwards brought back, and buried with the body at Durrow."

A monastery for Regular Canons of St. Augustine was erected here under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin and Columbkille, but the date of its erection is uncertain. It must have taken place after the Anglo-Norman invasion, as we find the original Abbey then plundered and despoiled by De Lacy.

Hugh de Tachman, Bishop of Meath, witnessed a grant of an annual rent of 40s. out of the lands of Mahaghtragh, by Walter, son of Mured. In the thirteenth century M—— was Abbot of St. Mary's, Durrow, and St. Mary's Abbey, Trim. His seal was found near Mullingar in 1833.

Respecting the ancient monastic seal found at Lymberry, two miles south of Mullingar, by some labourers, the "Dublin Penny Journal" of the 15th June, 1833, has the following:—"The seal is at present in possession of Mr. Richard Murray, Mullingar. On the obverse side it represents the whole length figure of an Abbot, full faced, with a crozier and cap, and outside the figure the following inscription, partly abbreviated in the old character: 'Sigillum M. Abbatis Sancte Marie de Trium.' 'The Seal of M. Abbot of St. Mary's, Trim.' On the reverse side is also the figure of an Abbot, but in profile, with the following inscription, also abbreviated: 'Sigillum M. Abbatis Sancte Marie de Durrow.' 'The Seal of the Abbot of St. Mary's, Durrow.'"

"These seals evidently belonged to an individual who was at the same time Abbot of the Augustinian communities of Trim and Durrow, the churches of which were both dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The holding of pluralities was not uncommon in our monastic establishments even in very remote times. The name of the Abbot M. is not preserved in our ecclesiastical records of either of the monasteries over which he ruled, as hitherto published, and thus these seals, like those given in former numbers of this work, add facts to our local and monastic histories which would be otherwise unknown. From the style of workmanship, and from a letter used in the inscriptions, we assign these seals to the close of the 13th century."

On the 13th July, 1833, the following letter as to the date of the seals was published in the work referred to, from the pen of our gifted townsman, the late lamented Dr. Dillon Kelly, J.P.:—

## ANCIENT MONASTIC SEALS.

“To the Editor of the ‘Dublin Penny Journal.’

“Sir,—I take the liberty of observing that your highly-talented correspondent, ‘P.’ must be, in my mind, mistaken, in his observations concerning the monastic seal in the 51st number of your journal, not only as regards the saint to whom the abbeys of whom M. was Abbot were dedicated, but also with respect to the date, he asserting that the abbeys were dedicated to the Virgin, and assigning the seal to correspond with the style of workmanship of the latter part of the thirteenth century, from both of which opinions I beg to dissent. In the first place the Virgin Mary, even at the present day, is ranked as superior to all saints, and her name at that remote period certainly never expressed with the adjunct of ‘Blessed’—an example of which may be seen on the tomb of Lord Portlester, in the 26th number of your journal—not entirely half a century subsequent to the time I assign as its origin. Secondly, the words ‘Sancta Maria,’ or St. Mary, are so closely impressed on the seal, that they could not, as your correspondent ‘P.’ asserts, be intended for the Virgin; for, if so, the inscription should then be—‘Sigillum M., Abbatis beati Maria Virginis, Trium’—‘The Seal of M., Abbot of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s, Trim.’ Whereas, it is plainly ‘Sigillum M. Abbatis Sancta Maria de Trium’—The Seal of M., Abbot of St. Mary’s, Trim,’ thus proving beyond the possibility of doubt the correctness of my previous version. and at the same time affording ample testimony as to the identity of the saint to whom the abbeys were dedicated. Now, sir, with reference to the date, I, for my part, feel inclined to allow it a less degree of antiquity than your correspondent, for in the first place, the workmanship, though very rude, is superior to any specimen we have of the engravings of the thirteenth century. Secondly, the style of the letters and marks of abbreviation also point to an era at least a century later than you correspondent ascribes. On all coins previous to the reign of Edward III., the M’s and N’s are formed precisely similar to the capital letters of the present day; but during the reign of that monarch, in the outer circle on the reverse side of his groats and half groats, in the words ‘Adjutorem Meum et Deum.’ Lastly, on all coins antecedent to the Conquest the marks of abbreviation are placed either under the word or before the last letter, but never after, two examples of which I give in the abbreviation of the word, ‘Monetarius.’ On the reverse of a provincial coin the mark of abbreviation is thus placed—

M.O.

and on the reverse of a coin of Edward II. thus—

M.O.

The first example showing it under the first, and the second before the last letter.

“Subsequent to the Conquest, the first coins on which marks of abbreviation occur are the Irish pennies of Edward I. They are, on their obverse sides, superior to the word, and are generally (but not always) thus placed—

D N S,

in the abbreviation of ‘Dominus,’ another instance of which we also observe on the groats of Richard II. over the word ‘London,’ which style continued to be used till the next reign. In the succeeding reign—that of Henry IV.—the marks of abbreviation are on his coins, in every instance, placed posterior to the word, and precisely similar to the style made use of on the seal, an example of which I give in the word ‘Henrieus,’ thus abbreviated ‘Henrie.’ On the seal, on its obverse side, the mark of abbreviation intersects the last letter of the word—the ‘i’ in ‘Sigil’—and on the reverse side is placed immediately after the word in the abbreviation of ‘abbatis’—thus clearly

indicating the age, the letter 'M' in the first place not preserving its original form in the word *Trium* on the obverse side; and secondly, the marks of abbreviation just then changing their position and taking that of the times to which their transition took place.

"Now, Mr. Editor, taking these facts into consideration, all of which combine in confirming the truth of my assertion, I am sure you will agree with me that the Abbot to whom the seal belonged must have flourished in the beginning of the fifteenth century, and during the reign of Henry IV. Hoping you will excuse this trespass on your patience.

"Believe me to remain, sir, most respectfully yours,

"D. KELLY.

"Mullingar."

### THE CROZIER OF DURROW.

IN reference to the Crozier of Durrow, O'Curry remarks:—"Our collection of antiquities comprise several beautiful croziers, many of which are of a very early period. Amongst these may be particularly noticed a fragment of the Crozier of Durrow, which is, perhaps, the oldest we have, and which, there is reason to believe, belonged to Columbkille himself, the founder of the Church of Durrow. It was presented by him to Cormac, his dear friend and successor."—(O'Curry's Lectures).

MacGeoghegan gives the following account of De Lacey, at Durrow:—

"Hugh de Lacy, Lord of Meath, having persecuted the Irish for a considerable time, and committed the most flagrant acts of injustice upon the inhabitants of Meath, ended his days miserably at Durrow, A.D. 1186. The tyrant's head was cut off by a blow of an axe which he received from a young Irish nobleman, in the disguise of a labourer, while he was superintending the building of a strong castle in that place. The person who performed this deed (whom some called Malachy Maclair, and others Symmachus O'Cahargo) fled to a neighbouring wood. The English who belonged to De Lacy's retinue were attacked also and put to the sword. If we cannot justify this action, which was barbarous in itself, circumstances must at least extenuate its atrocity. The dead body of the English nobleman was deprived of burial by the people for the cruelties he had committed, and kept concealed for some time. It, however, was discovered in 1195, and interred with great pomp in the Abbey of Bective, on the river Boyne, by Mathew O'Heney, Archbishop of Cashel and Apostolical-Legate, assisted by John Cumin, Archbishop of Dublin. The head of De Lacey was brought to Dublin and buried with Rosa de Munesnene, his first wife, in the Abbey of Thomas Court."

Lacey left two sons—Walter, the elder, Lord of Meath, and Hugh, afterwards of Ulster. In the churchyard of Durrow there is still a very handsome specimen of the ancient sculptural crosses, once so numerous in Ireland. Convenient to the cemetery, in the demesne, there is a quadrangular stone, with sides inclining, which formed the pedestal of another cross. There is a holy well here dedicated to Columbkille, once venerated and frequented, but now muddy and neglected. The graveyard of Durrow has been for ages a favourite place of sepulture. There are two ancient

Irish monumental stones in the churchyard—one to the memory of Cathalan, and the other asks a prayer for Agidin.

Dr. Petrie is of opinion that there was a round tower in former times at Durrow. However, if there was, all traces have been uprooted and swept away, like those of the abbey and church. The old crosses are the solitary sentinels reminding us of the glorious past. Durrow no longer exists—not a stone of it remains; its glories live in the traditions of the people; the plunderer and exterminator have ploughed up and swept away every vestige of abbey and church. Norbury completed what Lacy commenced. Yet, in its ruins and loneliness, there is a charm, and a holy spell around the hallowed site. The Martyrology of Donegal commemorates the festival of St. Cormac of Durrow on 21st June.

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#### HORSELEAP.

HORSELEAP, or Ardnurcher, lies three miles north of Kilbeggan, on the road leading to Moate. Here it was that Charles Lever located some of his brilliant creations—Con Cregan the Elder, the village lawyer and handy man at swearing, and who was prepared to swear for hire, and not unfrequently swear away in private the lives and liberties of his neighbours, and his son Con, the Irish Gil Blas.

The “Four Masters” informs us that the Norman adventurer, Sir Hugh de Lacy, he who had won all Ireland from the Shannon to the sea, erected a castle here in 1192.

Cæsar Otway, in his “Tour to Connaught” relates the following tradition of Horseleap:—

“Sir Hugh de Lacy, the great grantor of Meath, commenced the erection of this stronghold, but it was not his fate to see it finished; for while this great man, the favourite of his sovereign, and one of the most valiant of that extraordinary race who came over with Strongbow, was inspecting his rising fortress, and stooping down to give directions to a workman, an Irish labourer, deeply imbued with a sense of his country’s wrongs, clove his head with a single blow of his mattock.”

Tradition has it that, though the most active, valiant, and sage of men, De Lacy was small in stature, and was called *Le Petit*, and from hence the *Le Petits* of Westmeath derive their name and origin. Small men have often been found, not only wise in counsel, but brave leaders in the field—their energies seem to act with more power, as more concentrated. Sir Hugh was an extraordinary horseman, his leap over the drawbridge of his fortress is yet recorded, and the spot yet shown, and the name of the place and village will record as long as time lasts this feat of a Norman knight. Alas, for the De Lacys! Like the De Courcys and Tyrrels of that day, they did not respect the religious feelings of



the Irish people. The castle he was building he dared to found on the site of an ancient abbey. The Irish were shocked at the profanation. The act, therefore, of the assassin was applauded by all, and the avenging peasant's deed was looked on as meritorious, as exciting the anger of the patron saint of the place against him who was the usurper of his abbey, and the spoiler of his church. Hugh, the founder of Ardnurcher, or Horseleap, left two sons. Hugh, the eldest, one of the most politic of men, contrived to supplant John de Courcy, the conqueror of Ulster, in the favour of King John, and eventually succeeded in driving him out of the province and assuming the government. The story of the rival Norman adventurers, De Courcy and De Lacy, their strange vicissitudes of fortune—now favourites, now rebels—defeated to-day by De Courcy, and in a short space of time supplanting him, and driving him from Ulster; again falling under the displeasure of their monarch, and obliged to fly for refuge to France, and there forced to work as gardeners on the grounds of a Norman abbot; and again, when unable to conceal their noble bearing, they were detected by the good-natured ecclesiastic, and by his intercession reconciled to the king, and restored to their fiefs. We find the weak and vacillating John writing a letter to Walter de Lacy entreating him to forgive all animosities, and assuring him favour, honour, and protection.

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#### THE LEGEND OF CONOR MACNESSA, KING OF ULSTER.

THERE it was that Conor MacNessa, King of Ulster, was killed in the first century. As to the name Ardnurcher, the "Four Masters," in recording the erection of the castle in 1192, whose ruins are still there, call it Ath-an-Urchair; and the natives still call it in Irish Baile-atha-an-Urchair, pronounced Blaanurcher.

Conal Cearnach, on a certain occasion, slew in single combat a Leinster chieftain named Mesgechid (Mesgua), whose brains, according to the barbarous custom then prevalent, he mixed up with lime, and made of them a hard round ball, which he kept both as a weapon and as a trophy. There was at this time a war raging between Ulster and Connaught, and Cead (Keth) Mac Magach, a Connaught chief, having by stratagem obtained possession of the ball, kept it always slung from his girdle, for it had been prophesied that Magera would be avenged of the Ulsterman after his death, and Cead hoped that this prophecy would be fulfilled by means of the ball. Cead went at one time with his band to plunder some of the Ulster territories, and returning with a great spoil of cattle, he was pursued and overtaken by an army of Ulstermen, under the command of Conor, and a battle was

fought between them. The Connaught chief contrived to separate the king from his party, and watching his opportunity he cast the ball at him from his sling, and the ball struck the king on the head, and lodged in his skull. His physician, Fingen, was brought, and he declared that the king would die immediately if the ball were removed, but that if it were left so, and provided that the king kept himself free from all inquietude, he would live. And his head was stitched up with a golden thread, and he lived in this state for seven years, till the day of Our Lord's Crucifixion, when, observing the unusual darkness, he sent for Bacrach, his Druid, and asked him what it meant. Bacrach told him that the Son of God had been on that day crucified by the Jews. "That is a pity," said Conor. "Were I in His presence I would slay those who were around my King putting Him to death."

With that he rushed to a grove that stood near, and began hewing it with his sword, to show how he would deal with the Jews; and from the excessive fury which seized him, the ball started from his head, and some of his brains gushed out, and in that way he died.

The place where Conor was wounded was called "Ardnurcher," the Ford of the East, to which Michael O'Clery, in "O'Clery's Calendar," identifies with Horseleap in Westmeath.

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#### RORY OGE MACGEOGHEGAN.

THE yawning chasm over which it is said De Lacy plunged his war-horse in escaping from the Irish, whom he had insulted by his sacrilegious conduct, lies on the northern boundary of the railway, a short distance from the station-house. The marks of the animal's hooves are visible still, and are shown by the peasantry of the district to tourists as one of the wonders of the locality. It is doubtful, however, if the Norman adventurer performed the feat attributed to him, as there are other traditions extant of the famous leap, pointing to a later period after the surrender of Limerick. There is no epoch in Irish history more dismal than that which followed the Violated Treaty of Limerick, October 3rd, 1669. Up to that time there was chivalry and soul in the country, after which succeeded the long dark night of bondage and despair. Sarsfield was gone! The Irish soldiers—the bone and sinew of the country—passed over to the continent; and there were none left to defend the altars of fatherland, or avenge the wrongs of the people, save the bold rapparees.

During one of my rambles I visited Horseleap to have a look at Con Cregan's holding, which Lever assures us was on the boundary of the two counties, and had the pleasure of hearing from Mickey the Drover, a true-born native of the village, the story of Rory Oge MacGeoghegan, the daring rapparee of Ardnurcher, who avenged the wrongs of his kith and kin.

Rory Oge MacGeoghegan was a member of the famous sept, lords of Moycashel, and resided at Gageborough during the last decade of the seventeenth century, on a small farm, all that was left to the family by the confiscators. Rory, like thousands of other Irish gentlemen who had been despoiled of their estates, was a firm adherent of the faithless house of Stuart; and when the Dutch Stadtholder landed at Carrickfergus with the flag of rebellion uplifted against his father-in-law, the brave MacGeoghegan joined the regiment of Colonel Nugent, brother to the Earl of Westmeath, and took part in all the battles, from the Boyne to the capitulation of Limerick; but he sternly refused to quit the old land, or avail himself of the privileges guaranteed by the Treaty—afterwards violated—till he would avenge the wrongs inflicted on himself and his neighbours. On returning from Limerick he found that his house, and in which he had been born, was in possession of strangers, and that his aged mother had been turned out to die on the roadside.

It was Christmas Eve, but for him, alas! no yule-log burned in the once happy home of his fathers; no holly and ivy glistened; no twelfth-night cake was divided; no carol was chanted in “the old house at home.” Every earthly hope for him had fled, even that of sleeping in death with his ancestors, were for him now blighted. With a heavy heart he turned towards Sionan, to the house of his old nurse and his foster-brother, Molly Kinsella and her son Jack. They, too, were deprived of their little means by the Williamite soldiers, but they shared freely whatever they possessed with the wanderer; and from them he learned that a short time after he (Rory) joined the army to oppose the invaders, a Cromwellian settler in the neighbourhood seized his little property and held it by a deed granted to him by the Government of William of Orange. Rory, on hearing how his aged mother had been treated, and of her death in the house of an humble peasant, and he far away, preyed on his mind so much that he registered an oath that—come weal, come woe—he would not leave the land of his birth till he would have made suitable reprisals, aye, in the lifeblood of those who had wronged him; and well was the vow kept.

For months Rory and his foster-brother were the terror of the Palatines, and not unfrequently were the banks of the Gageboro’ river and its waters dyed with the lifeblood of the despoilers. As was customary with the rapparees of those days, they divided the booty with the poor, who in their turn sheltered and supplied himself and his companion with food, and warned them of the approach of danger. One evening in the month of August, 1692, the two rapparees were returning from Clara laden with the spoils of the enemy, when they discovered they were pursued by an armed band mounted on swift horses. As Jack’s horse was a sorry nag, Rory advised him to abandon it, and to conceal himself as best he could, and if they escaped with life and limb, they were to meet at mid-



night near Donore. So giving spurs to his fiery steed, he plunged over the yawning chasm and reached the opposite bank in safety, and just as his merciless pursuers came up, the foremost of which rushed into the terrible gulf and disappeared.

The remainder of the story is briefly told. On a foggy evening in the November following the faithful foster-brothers were on board of a French lugger to join the Wild Geese on the continent. Her deck was crowded with men, who seemed, despite the thick haze, all anxiously bent on catching a glimpse of the shore. One would have thought they were returning emigrants, anxious once more to reach their native land. Yet such was not the case. They had all bidden that land a last farewell that evening. Night at length fell, and Ireland faded for ever from their view. Rory or his companions never returned to Ireland. They found a grave in the land of the stranger.

Such was the substance of Mickey's tale.

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The parish of Horseleap contains 10,899 statute acres, of which 10,673 were applotted under the Tithe Act. There is a considerable tract of bog, but no mountain or waste land. The principal seats are Bracca Castle, Gageborough, and Temple Macater. The Catholic church, which is a spacious building, was erected in 1809. The Protestant church, to which a spire was added in 1822, stands on an eminence above the village.

Anciently there were several castles, now partly in ruins. That of Donore, during the lifetime of Sir Richard Nagle, was kept in repair. The Fort of Ardnurcher, or Ard-an-Orchor—literally translated, "The Fort of Slaughter"—was one of the frontier forts of the English of the Pale. At Temple Macater are the remains of a monastery said to have been founded by St. Kieran; and at Gageborough was a nunnery founded by Matilda de Lacy in the thirteenth century. Many coins have been dug up at the former place. A holy well, dedicated to St. David, was formerly much resorted to on the patron day, the 27th June, but the custom is gradually falling into disuse.

The "Four Masters" records that a castle was erected here in 1192. The old church of Ardnurcher was levelled in the seventeenth century, and a Protestant place of worship erected on its site. Tigh Bherighda, or Bridget's House, a small chapel, stood here on the townland of Ardnurcher, dedicated to St. Bridget, which in latter years has been pulled down and uprooted. St. Bridget's Well is still here, and is occasionally frequented. A church and convent were founded, it is said, at Kilbride, by St. Bridget; and it is believed that this was the first church erected by her after her religious profession on the Hill of Usnach. There are still some remains of an old monastery and chapel, and the fragments of a church, in the cemetery contiguous.

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## SYONAN.

SYONAN, or Sionan, lies on the northern bank of the Clara railway, and was the ancient patrimony of a branch of the MacGeoghegan family.

The "Four Masters" (A.D. 703) gives the following account of this locality :—

"St. Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, the biographer of St. Columba, preached on a hill here to his relatives (the race of Fiacha, son of Niall), on the occasion of his visit to Ireland. In commemoration of this event the place has been called Suide Adamnan."

The Abbe MacGeoghegan in his "History of Ireland" gives the following account of some distinguished members of the MacGeoghegans of Sionan :—

"In the month of February, 1690, King James, having been informed that a body of insurgents had assembled near Cavan, sent the Duke of Berwick with troops to disperse them. The duke found them much superior to him in numbers, being in fact three to one. A brisk battle was fought between some English cavalry and the king's infantry, the latter of whom retired with loss. Colonel William Nugent had a leg broken, and died of his wounds a few days after the conflict. He was brother to the Earl of Westmeath; he was an intrepid soldier, but rash. Conly MacGeoghegan (who was a colonel) and several others were killed. He was son of Charles MacGeoghegan of Sionan, a branch of the MacGeoghegans of Kinel Fiacha, in the county of Westmeath. Conly studied the military art in France, where he served for some time, and passed as a good officer. The father and seven sons, of whom Conly was the eldest, served under King James with distinction in his war against the Prince of Orange. Of the seven brothers, five were killed in this war. The other two followed the fortunes of their king into France, the eldest of whom, named Anthony, was created a chevalier or knight. Charles, the youngest, died whilst captain of Grenadiers in Berwick's regiment. He left three sons. There is still living one, Alexander, in the regiment of Lally. He distinguished himself in the Indies, Sept. 30, 1759; at the battle of Vaudavicht, where he commanded in the absence of Lally, and had the honour of defeating the English army, much superior to his in numbers."

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Lismoyne, or Lismoyny, about midway between Kilbeggan and Clara, near the river Brosna, and is remarkable as having been the residence of Conal MacGeoghegan, translator of the "Annals of Clonmacnoise." Conal descended from the Lords of Moycashel, lived at Lismoyny, in the parish of Ardnurcher, or Horse-leap, barony of Moycashel, Westmeath. He was a celebrated Irish scholar. He translated and compiled from various ancient records, the book known as the "Annals of Clonmacnoise," in the year 1627, and dedicated to his friend and kinsman Torlogh MacCoghlan, Lord of Delvin (present barony of Garrycastle). The original "Annals of Clonmacnoise" came down only to A.D. 1227, but in MacGeoghegan's translation from other sources

the entries were extended to A.D. 1408. O'Donovan speaks in flattering terms of this work in his introductory remarks (p. 33, "Four Masters"). The "Rem Ree Ria, or Succession of the Kings of Ireland," a historic work compiled by Brother Michael O'Clery, one of the Four Masters, was commenced in the house of Conal MacGeoghegan, was carried on under the patronage of Turlogh MacCoghlan, and was finished in the Franciscan Friary of Athlone, on the 4th of November, 1630.

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#### DONORE.

DONORE lies between Streamstown and Horseleap, and in ancient times was the patrimony of the great MacGeoghegan family. Mitchell, in his "History of Ireland," gives the following account of Mr. Kedagh Geoghegan, and the evil effects of the Penal Laws during the last century:—"Mr. Kedagh Geoghegan, of Donore, in the County of Westmeath, who, though remaining faithful to the creed of his forefathers, enjoyed the esteem and respect of the Protestant resident gentry of the county. Notwithstanding that his profession of the Roman Catholic religion precluded his performing the functions of a grand juror, he attended the assizes of Mullingar regularly, in common with other gentlemen of Westmeath, and dined with the grand jurors. On one of those occasions, a Mr. Stepney, a man of considerable fortune in the county, approached him, and remarked:—"Geoghegan, that is a capital team to your carriage. I have rarely seen four finer horses, or better matched. Here, Geoghegan, are twenty pounds," tendering him the money in gold. "You understand me—they are mine." And he moved towards the door, apparently with the intention of taking possession of his purchase.

"The horses, not yet detached from Mr. Geoghegan's carriage, were still in the yard of the inn close by. 'Hold, Stepney,' said Geoghegan, 'wait a moment. I shall not be more than that time.'

"He then quitted the room abruptly, and was seen rushing in great haste towards the inn at which he always put up. There was something in the scene which had just occurred that shocked the feelings of those who witnessed it, and something in the manner of Geoghegan that produced a dead silence, and a conviction that it was not to end there. Not a word was yet spoken when the report of four pistol shots struck their ears, and in a few seconds afterwards Geoghegan was perceived coming from the direction of the inn, laden with firearms.

"He mounted to the room in which the party were assembled, holding by their barrels a brace of pistols in each hand, and walking directly up to Stepney, he said :—

" 'Stepney, you cannot have the horses for which you bid just now.'

" 'I can, and will have them !'

" 'You can't—I have shot them ; and, Stepney, unless you be as great a coward as you are a scoundrel, I will do my best to shoot you ! Here—choose your weapon, and take your ground. Gentlemen, open if you please, and see fair play.'

"He then advanced upon Stepney, offering him the choice of either pair of pistols. Stepney, however, declined the combat, and quitted the room, leaving Geoghegan the object of the unanimous condolences of the rest of the party, and overwhelmed with their expressions of sympathy and regret for the perversion of the law, of which Mr. Stepney had just sought to make him the object. In tendering £20 for horses that were worth twenty times that sum, Stepney was only availing himself of one of the enactments of the Penal Code, which forbade a Papist the possession of a horse over the value of £5. Notwithstanding this incident, old Kedagh Geoghegan continued to visit Mullingar during the assizes for many years afterwards ; but to avoid a similar outrage, and to keep in recollection the cruel nature of the Popery Laws, his cattle thenceforward consisted of four oxen."

Mitchel gives another instance of the mischievous effects of the Penal Statutes of Anne, and the straits to which Catholics were driven to protect their property. He says :—" Seventy or eighty years ago, there resided in Soho Square, London, an Irish Roman Catholic gentleman, known among his friends as 'Geoghegan of London.' Pretending to be (or being really) alarmed, lest a relative—Mr. Geoghegan, of Jamestown, near Castletown-G.—should conform to the Protestant religion, and possess himself of a considerable property, situate in 'Westmeath, he resolved on a proceeding, to which the reader will attach any epithet it may seem to warrant. He repaired to Dublin, reported himself to the necessary authorities, and professed, in all its required legal forms, the Protestant religion on Sunday, sold his estates on Monday, and relapsed into Popery on Tuesday. Thus, when asked the motive of his abjuration of Catholicism, Geoghegan replied, 'I would rather trust my soul to God for a day than my property for a day to my friend !' This somewhat impious speech was in keeping with his conduct at Christ Church, when he made his religious profession. The Sacramental wine being presented to him, he drank off the entire contents of the cup. The officiating clergyman rebuked his indecorum. 'You need not grudge it to me,' replied the neophyte ; 'it's the dearest glass of wine I ever

drank.' In the afternoon of the same day he entered the Globe Coffee Rooms, Essex Street, then frequented by the most respectable of the citizens of Dublin. The room was crowded. Putting his hand to his sword, and throwing a glance of defiance around, Geoghegan said—'I have read my recantation to-day, and any man who says I did right is a rascal.' A Protestant, with whom he was conversing the moment before he left home to read his recantation, said to him, 'For all your assumed Protestantism, Geoghegan, you will die a Papist.' Geoghegan replied, 'that is the first thing of which I am capable.'"

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In 772 a sanguinary battle was fought here between the Irish and the foreign enemies at a ford on the river near the present bridge, since called Aghnacchan, or the "Ford of Heads," from the numbers of heads that floated down the river.

The population of the parish in 1841 was 4,039, of which 1,985 lived in the town. The parish contains 2,975 statute acres, as applotted under the old Tithe Act.

The ancient corporation of Kilbeggan consisted of a portreeve (who was a magistrate), twelve free burgesses, and an indefinite number of freemen, with a recorder, town clerk, two sergeants, and other officers. The freedom of the town was obtained by the favour of the portreeve and burgesses. The borough returned two member to the Irish Parliament till the Union, when it was disfranchised, and the sum of £15,000 was given to the landlord, Gustavus Lambert, who was one of its base representatives, as compensation for the job. A borough Court of Record, for the recovery of debts not exceeding five marks, was held; also a Court of Petty Sessions every second Saturday, in which the portreeve occasionally attended. During the disturbance of 1798 a little band of patriots made a brave resistance against Colonel Blake and the English forces, but after a gallant struggle were defeated.

The following were the Members of Parliament for Kilbeggan during the last century :—Charles Lambert, Sen., from 1727 to 1752; Charles Lambert, Jun., 1727 to 1741; Gustavus Lambert, 1741 to 1775; Hamilton Lambert, 1752 to 1761; Thomas Tipping, 1761 to 1769; Charles Lambert, 1769 to 1784; Sir Richard Johnston, 1776 to 1784; John Philpot Curran and Henry Flood, 1784 to 1791; Thomas Burgh and William Sherlock, 1791 to 1798; Gustavus Lambert and Sir Francis Hopkins, 1798 to 1800.



The following pastors officiated in Kilbeggan during the same period :—In 1690 Rev. John Daly was presented by James II. to the Rectory of Kilbeggan. In 1704 Rev. Anthony Mitchel was registered at Mullingar as “Popish Priest of Kilbeggan.” He was ordained at Valentia, in Spain, by John Salizanes, Bishop of Valentia, in 1688; lived at Donore the year of the Registration, and had for “sureties,” in accordance with the Penal Statute, Hugh Flanagan, of Horseleap, and Denis Browne, of Hopestown. Same year Rev. Anthony Cogan was registered as “Popish Priest of Castlelost and Rahugh.” Their immediate successors were Fathers Devine and Magrath, the latter gentleman is supposed to be buried in Rathconnell. Rev. M. Dunne was appointed Parish Priest in 1779, and died in 1815, and is buried in the Church of the Relic. The late illustrious Bishop of Meath, Dr. Cantwell, was appointed Parish Priest of this parish in 1820. The Rev. M. Pierce succeeded, and died in 1863. Father W. Hope was his immediate successor.

THE END.



## APPENDIX TO VOL. I.



## BALLINACARGY.

## TRISTERNAGH ABBEY—THE PIERS FAMILY.

SIR HENRY PIERS, in his "History of Westmeath" (1682), gives the following particulars of Tristernagh, where he resided at that period :—"Tristernagh, the word seems to denote thorns, thistles, or briars. This monastery is built, as many ancient collegiate churches have been, in the form of a cross, having in the centre thereof a tower or steeple, raised on the four innermost corners of the cross, from each of which corners the wall as it riseth slopeth off until the whole is brought into an octagon, whence forward the tower riseth about thirty feet in eight sides, in each of which is a window. The wall of the church and steeple, though without a roof time out of mind, remains to this day very firm and substantial.

"This abbey was founded by Sir Geoffrey Constantine, who was one of our English conquerors, in or soon after the time of Henry II., to whom for his service was given the territories of Kilbixy and Rathmarthy. In his charter of donation to this abbey he styles himself lord of the territory of Kilbixey. The generous founder, among his other large donations to this monastery, gives his lands in Connaught, without naming any particular, whereas in all he had given before he is so curious as not content with barely naming them, he describes their very boundaries. Advising with an ancient and judicious friend what he could imagine might be the reason hereof, he told me that this was usual with great conquerors and warriors of old, who, confiding in their own prowess and good fortune, oftentimes designed land to such and such uses, even before they had conquered them. Hence we may conclude that Connaught was not yet conquered when this abbey was founded, and whether our conquerors did or not after this time make any impression on Connaught I cannot learn.

"On the demesne belonging to this abbey the great O'Doherty, with his followers and forces out of Connaught to the number of 600 men, is said to have encamped on an hillock, where grew a thorn bush, called by the natives, from his defeat, O'Doherty's bush, although since that on another occasion it

hath another name. He having sat here for many days, was at last set upon by one of the Queen's captains, his name nor the time I could never learn. After a brisk engagement on both sides, some of O'Doherty's chief men falling, he gave ground and retired, hoping to be received and protected by Nugent, then tenant within the abbey walls. But Nugent, who, it is said, had been kind to him before, seeing him fly and the Queen's forces at his heels, denied him entrance. Thus he and his men, missing of this hope, made but very weak resistance, insomuch that they were all miserably slain under the walls of the abbey, few or none escaping. Whether any found quarter I cannot find. The slain, to a great but uncertain number, were buried on the spot, as daily experience shows us when occasion is given of digging in our garden anything more than ordinary deep." This account, though lame, is the best I could ever hear of the action.

West hereof, not a quarter of a mile, is situated a small but well-built chapel, now in good repair, wherein hangeth one small bell, which had the good fortune to escape the fury and rapine of the late war. This church is called Templecross. In this chapel, in our late Bishop of Meath's days, were ordained at one time eleven or more deacons, and at another time six or seven. This place supplieth the defect of our mother church of Kilbixy, now out of repair. Before we leave this chapel yard it may not be amiss, perhaps, to entertain our readers with a certain miracle that was herein wrought, and of which venerable tradition gives us to this effect.

"We have from ancient times a certain religious relique even yet amongst us, kept by a certain gentleman, a great zealot of the Roman Church. With no small veneration they call it 'corpnu' (see "Ancient and Modern Sketches," vol. i. p. 66). It hath been and is still much venerated by members of the Roman persuasion who live hereabouts. At times it is offered to them as a sacred oath, by which none dare swear falsely for fear his mouth should run away up to his ears, or some other great deformity or sudden death should betide them. Nor are we without stories of judgments of this sort that have befallen false swearers. I was told that in old times, when the monks dwelt here, one of their young friars had occasion to carry the relique across Lough Iron, carrying it under his arm in a cot; it chanced to fall into the lake, where, being overladen with brass, silver, and crystal, it sunk. The young friar reported the loss, whereupon the whole convent is dissolved into lamentations, sorrow, and mourning, and prayers were offered up for its restoration by the people of the neighbouring parishes, when it was miraculously restored to its owners and custodians."

The earliest record we have of the Piers family is that William was the first of the name to settle in Ireland. He came over

during the reign of Elizabeth, in 1566, and obtained a high post in the army. He obtained large grants of land from the virgin queen, and the Abbey of Tristernagh. He was Governor of Carrickfergus and Seneschal of the county of Antrim. He is stated by Hollingshead to have been the person who brought in the head of Shane O'Neill, for which he received a thousand marks. His son, Henry, settled at Tristernagh, and no way deterred by penal statutes or the cruelties practised on his Irish Catholic neighbours by the Reformers, he embraced the tenets of the persecuted faith. He married Jane, daughter of Dr. Thomas Jones, Archbishop of Dublin, Lord Chancellor and Lord Justice of Ireland, ancestor to Lord Ranelagh. He died in 1623. Mr. James Moughty, Ballinacargy, kindly placed at our disposal a copy of the inscription on Sir Henry Piers' tombstone, in Templecross graveyard, translated by the late Rev. P. M. Grue, Superior of St. Mary's College, Dundalk. The reverend gentleman was on a visit with Mr. and Mrs. Moughty, who are sole owners of historic Tristernagh, the property having been purchased by the late Mr. Michael Duggan, of Buenos Ayres, and presented to his sister, Mrs. Moughty, as a gift. We were told that many learned persons examined the old tomb, which is partially obliterated and covered with moss, and endeavoured to translate the inscription, which is in Latin, but without success, till Father Grue deciphered it. The reverend, pious, and learned gentleman died last year shortly after his return from Rome, where he had been to witness the beatification of one of the Marist Fathers, Blessed Peter. May he rest in peace.

"Beneath this stone lies (Sir) Henry Piers, of Tristernagh House, renowned for his piety, and descended from a noble race, who, from a pious impulse, had erected this monument for himself, after he renewed this sacred edifice and made the adjoining grounds. Reader, assist his soul by your prayers. 1623."

His grandson, Sir Henry Piers, born 1629, wrote the "Chorographical History of Westmeath" in 1682, which was published in 1770 by Colonel Charles Vallancy. Piers was a bigot, and hated everything Irish and Catholic; consequently portions of his book is disfigured with the prejudices of the times in which the writer lived. Sir John Bennett Piers, sixth baronet, succeeded to the title in 1798. Lord Cloncurry brought an action against Sir John for criminal conversation with his wife, Eliza Georgina, youngest daughter of Major-General George Morgan (which marriage was dissolved by Act of Parliament in 1811), on which occasion a verdict for £10,000 was given by the jury. In consequence of this verdict he left the country for several years. He died abroad in 1845, and was succeeded in the title by his nephew.



Archdall, writing towards the end of the last century, thus describes the ruins of this once beautiful and celebrated monastery:—"This magnificent and venerable edifice, in the form of a cross, and of considerable extent, was built of a blackish stone, and the steeple was remarkable, being an octagon erected on the top of a square tower, which, though mutilated, was, in the year 1780, seventy-four feet high; the columns were also octagon, with plain capitals. This abbey was totally destroyed in 1783 by Sir William Pigot Piers."

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## KILBIXY.

### THE MALONE FAMILY.

PIERS gives the following description of Kilbixy in his time:—"Kilbixy, the chief seat of our before-mentioned conqueror's residence, and head of his territory; of old a town of great note, as tradition telleth us,—twelve burgesses in their scarlet gowns, a mayor or sovereign, with other officers suitable to so great a port. Of this so great state so small are now the remains, that we may say—'History even doubts if it ever existed.'

"The only remaining footsteps that I have met with hereof, is a large piece of an old square castle, called the Burgage Castle, and forty acres of ground adjoining to it, also called the Burgage land, corruptly for the Burgesses' land—these believed to have been the town house and the land belonging to the corporation. There is also on the bank of our Iron lake, not far from hence, a place which in the Irish dialect sounds the haven of the market, this likely having been the landing place of such as from the eastern banks had occasion to this market. Whether this town of old sent burgesses to parliament or not I do not find; but tradition says, that our cross and market were, in what age I know not, transferred hence to Mullingar, and perhaps with them our right to send burgesses to parliament also. Other reminders of ancient state I find none, unless you take for such the ruins, or rubbish rather, of ancient houses and castles, besides which, and some late built cabins, nothing is to be seen but excellent corn of all kinds.

"The golden corn now grows where stood proud Troy."

In this town stands the remains of an ancient and well-built church, the mother of many churches and chapels about it, which had at the west end a very high tower or steeple.

Kilbixy Castle is said to have been built by De Lacy in 1192, and was subsequently the seat of Geoffrey de Constantine, who founded at Tristernagh a priory of Canons Regular, sometimes called the priory of Kilbixy, and richly endowed. The last prior was Edmund Nugent, Bishop of Kilmore, who held it with his

bishopric ; and a pension of £26 12s. 4d. was granted to him on its surrender. The town arose under the protection of the castle, and in the reign of Henry VI. was one of the borough towns of Meath. The parish contains 5,660 statute acres, and is richly embellished with plantations that extend to Lough Iron, which is one of its boundaries.

The principal residence is Baronstown, which was built by Sir Anthony Malone, and is now the residence of Mr. J. Malone, D.L., formerly of Ballinahowen. The Protestant church is a handsome building, erected at the expense of the late Lord Sunderlin. Edmund Malone, the celebrated commentator on Shakespeare, is interred here ; and the Malone family have a handsome mausoleum near the church. The Malone family are said to derive their descent from the O'Connors, kings of Connaught, and to have borne the name originally.

Ballinahowen was the seat of the family for centuries. Edmund Malone of Ballinahowen, who lived in the reign of Elizabeth, married a daughter of Richard Daltons of Milltown ; and in 1689 we find an Edmund Malone of the same place was returned as one of the parliamentary representatives of the borough of Athlone. Sir Anthony Malone, better known as the Prime Sergeant, took his degrees at Christ Church, Oxford. He was called to the Irish Bar in 1726, and continued to practise for fifty years—the brightest ornament of the profession. He represented this county till his death, with the exception of seven years after the death of George II., from 1760 to 1767. In 1740 he was appointed Prime Sergeant-at-Law, but was dismissed in 1754 in consequence of having taken an active part in the House of Commons in support of their rights to dispose, without the previous consent of the Crown, of money already raised by Act of Parliament, and unappropriated. In 1757, he was made Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ireland. From this situation he was removed in 1760, on which he resumed the barrister's gown, but not the wig ; he pleaded in court without that absurd and ridiculous depository of legal wisdom. Sir Anthony was a great orator and wit, and a sincere advocate of Catholic claims and national independence. Sir Anthony had a chapel erected for his mother at Baronstown, who was a sincere Catholic. She belonged to the ancient family of Melady. M'Gee says of Malone :—"The leader of the patriot army, Sir Anthony Malone, was compared at this period to a great sea in a calm. He was considered even by the fastidious Lord Shelbourne the equal in oratory of Chatham and Mansfield. He died after eight days' illness on the 8th of May, 1776, and was succeeded by his brother, Edmund, one of the Judges of the Common Pleas. He represented for a time the borough of Granard and Westmeath. Judge Malone passed the death sentence on Father Nicholas Sheehy, in 1766, at Clonmel, on the charge of accomplishing the murder of a man named Brydge, who

was alive in America, and sent there by those who plotted away the life of the poor priest. It is said that the outrageous verdict and barbarous sentence, which was carried out with remorseless ferocity by the local bigots of the county Tipperary, so incensed Sir Anthony that he was estranged for years from his brother. Edmund Malone, son of Judge Malone, is chiefly known as a commentator on Shakespeare, and was called 'Shakespeare Malone.' He was born in Dublin in 1741. He was sent to Trinity College, and after graduating there he entered the Inner Temple in 1763, and was called to the Irish Bar in 1767. His first appearance in the Courts gave every promise of future success. An independent fortune, however (Shinglas estate), soon devolved upon him, he retired from the Bar, devoted his life to literary pursuits, and ultimately became the cumbrous commentator on the works of the immortal Shakespeare. On retiring from the legal profession he removed to London, where he soon became acquainted with Johnson, Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, Bishop Percy, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, the latter of whom made him executor of his will. In 1778 Malone published two supplementary volumes to Johnson and Stevenson's edition of Shakespeare, containing the poems and some doubtful plays. In 1790 he published a new edition of Shakespeare in ten volumes, which was undoubtedly the best that had appeared up to that time. He also rendered valuable aid in detecting the impudent Shakespearian forgeries put forward by Mr. W. H. Ireland. In 1796 he wrote an historical 'Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage.' The following year the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, with a memoir of the distinguished painter, appeared, followed by the prose works of Dryden. In 1803, the works of Gerard Hamilton, with a sketch of his life, was published. Although Malone resided for many years in England, he advised his friends to vote against the Union; and notwithstanding his studious and retired habits, his advice and opinions were sought for and valued by men of high rank and influence in the political world. This distinguished man died after a short illness on the 25th May, 1812. He was interred near the family residence, Baronstown. He desired that his valuable library should go to Trinity College, Dublin; but his brother, Lord Sunderlin, presented it to the Bodleian Library at Oxford, in the belief that it would be more useful there. Richard Malone, known by the title Lord Sunderlin, represented the borough of Granard in the Irish parliament from 1768 to 1776. He was returned for Westmeath in 1782, and died in 1817. Mr. Malone, the present owner of Baronstown, is one of the Ballinahowen branch; he was born in 1817, and succeeded to the property in 1866."

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## SONNA—THE TUITE FAMILY.

SONNA, the seat of the Tuite family for upwards of six centuries, is at present unoccupied. The house is a light and elegant building, in a well-planted demesne, situated on the bank of a picturesque lake. Sir Richard De Tuyte accompanied Richard De Clare, the Earl of Pembroke, commonly called Strongbow, to Ireland in the year 1172, and died 1211, leaving two sons, Richard De Tuyte, surnamed the black, and Maurice. Sir Richard, the elder son, founded the monastery of Granard about the year 1210, at which time he held the manor of Kilalton and Demar. Maurice, his brother, was lord of Jordanstown. Sir Edmund Tuite, of Tuitestown, was born in 1587. He married Alice, daughter of James Fitzgerald of Laccagh, and died in 1638, leaving issue by her, who remarried with Walter Nugent, of Portloman. He was father of the Lady Abbess of Bethelam, near Athlone, of the Order of St. Clair, which was burned and plundered by the Cromwellian soldiery during the war of the Confederation. Edmund, his son, born in 1612, a Catholic, forfeited his estates for his loyalty to the old faith. He married Mary, daughter of Sir Oliver Tuite of Sonna. (In the list of confiscations, 1653, we find the names of Sir Oliver Tuite, Empor, and Dame Mabel Tuite, Sonna). William, his son, was killed at the battle of Aughrim, 1691. He was Brigadier-General in the army of James II. Walter, of Tuitestown, who with his brother, served in the same army, was attainted, 6th William and Mary. On referring to Burke's "Landed Gentry" we find that a Sir Henry Tuite of Sonna married, in 1728, Mary Rochfort, sister to the notorious Earl of Belvidere, by whom he had one son, George, born in 1729. Sir George succeeded to the title, and resided at Sonna. He was murdered on the 12th February, 1783, while sitting in his study about ten o'clock at night. He had a small favourite King Charles spaniel lying on a chair beside him, whose brains were beaten out as well as its master's by some blunt instrument. There was not any robbery committed, neither were the papers in the study disturbed. The murderer was never discovered, and it was supposed the assassination of the baronet was the result of domestic treason. A hammer was found in the adjacent pond besmeared with blood, which is supposed to have been used by the assassin. Hugh Tuite, born 1747, entered the army, was in the 14th Light Dragoons, and attained the rank of Captain in the 39th regiment of foot, in which he served twelve years at Gibraltar, three years and seven months of which was during the blockade. He there made a prisoner of Baron Von Helmstadt, and received his sword. Mr. Lyons, in his "Anecdotes of the Westmeath Gentry," relates that Captain Tuite attended one of Lady



Ormond's parties shortly after his retirement from military service, and there met Captain Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, who was aide-de-camp to Lord Westmoreland, the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The Captain was engaged at a card table with Lady Ormond as his partner, when he observed some young gentlemen and officers highly entertained and smiling at each other. He soon saw from the direction of their eyes that he was the object of their mirth, and turning sharply round to ascertain in what manner he had been so fortunate as to contribute to the evening's amusement, he found Captain Wellesley behind his chair diverting himself and the company with his queue, the end of which he had at that moment most unfortunately a tight hold of. Captain Tuite stood up, he was a tall and powerful man, and took the facetious aide-de-camp by the neck, and lifted him completely off the ground, gave him an angry shake, and dropped him without uttering a word. In a short time Captain Wellesley, accompanied by another officer, came up to Captain Tuite, the former much agitated, and apologised for the unwarrantable liberty he had taken with him. Captain Tuite drew himself up to his full height and replied, "As the apology has been as public as the offence, I forget it, sir," and made his bow.

The late Hugh Morgan Tuite was born in 1795. He represented this county from 1826 to 1830, and from 1842 to 1847. He died in 1868.

During the war of the Revolution there resided at Larah an ancient family, the Fitzgeralds, who held a small property there for ages. Oliver Fitzgerald espoused the cause of James II. After the battle of the Boyne, at which he fought, his estate was forfeited, and he was obliged to fly to France for shelter and a home, and died there, leaving his son Oliver, seven years of age, after him. This Oliver embraced the Protestant religion, and married Miss Gay, of Gaybrook.

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#### BALLYMORE.

SIR HENRY PIERS says of Ballymore in 1682 :—"Ballymore, a market town, having two fairs in the year, seated on the west side of Lough Seudy. Here was founded a strong garrison of the English forces, towards the latter end of the war, 1641. This garrison seated on the skirts of the lake, was divided by a graff deep and wide, with ramparts of earth, and bulwarks. The ditch was so low carried as to receive three or four feet of restagnant water of the lake, over which was a drawbridge, the entry into the fort. This was the chief fortress of this county. Here is now a church, built on the old foundation, in repair, except only the

east end. Adjoining the town is the old dissolved monastery of Plary. Here was formerly both a friary and nunnery, but in separate buildings, both of the Cistercian Order. The land hereinto belonging to the Bishop of Meath, yet are withholden from that See, either by the adventurer, or the Lord Netterville. West and north from hence, about a half mile, we have a fair, large, and spacious field, by the road leading to Athlone, all excellent, arable, and as smooth as a die, called in the Irish tongue Maghere Tibbet, that is, the field of Theobald, from the defeat of Theobald Vernon, who here fought a battle in King Henry the Eighth's time, against some party of the Irish, and was in the field slain. This Sir Theobald had his quarters and garrison in Ballymore, adjoining, but what force he commanded, or who the enemy was that he engaged, or of the success of the day, I have not been able to learn one word, though it is much to be feared our chief dying in the field, that the English came by the worst, for it is seldom met with in history that chiefs are victors in death."

Mullaghmeehan lies about a mile south of Ballymore, and was the property of the Dalton family, a branch of the famous Rathconrath sept. Piers relates that "Young Dalton of Mullaghmeehan, who was attached to Sir James Dillon, the commander of the Catholic forces, deserted and took service at Athlone, under the Lord President of Connaught, turned Protestant and married the daughter of the Bishop of Elphin. He was a very honest Protestant and gentleman, and a good soldier (all traitors and turncoats are so), who had all along continued faithful and constant to the English at Athlone. The poor gentleman, during a truce, took it into his head to visit his friends in Ballymore. They flock about him, and making show of great love, they engage him in drink, and detain him beyond the time of parley, so that unawares he stays amidst his supposed friends, but, indeed, real enemies, who now first make him a prisoner, telling him the time of the truce was out, and immediately they send to acquaint his father, old Dalton, and demands to know what he would have done with him. He, out of bravado, whether really desirous his son should suffer or not is uncertain, asked why they had not hanged the rascal. With this kind of answer the messenger returned, and they whose custody he was in, made no more ado, but immediately trust up the poor gentleman, merely for being a Protestant and preserving his loyalty to his King." (Piers had no words of sympathy for those unfortunates butchered by the brutal English and the recreant Irish of the Dalton type. The Convent of Bethelam was burned and plundered by those miscreants, and the nuns left houseless and homeless, and Piers gloats over the diabolical atrocity with fiendish joy, and declares it to be a meritorious act). His widow remains with us to this day, a lady of excellent parts, and a living testimony of cruelty and perfidiousness.

Henry VIII., made the church of this monastery the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Meath, which it continued to be for a short time. In the Parliamentary War of 1641, this was the principal military station of the English in this part of the country. The garrison had possession of a strong fortress on the banks of Lough Seudy, which was accessible only from the land by a drawbridge across a wide and deep moat. In the war of the Revolution, when a part of the English army had fortified Mullingar, this place was strengthened by a party of the Irish forces from their head-quarters at Athlone, with a view of acting against Mullingar.

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### THE SIEGE OF BALLYMORE.

JOHN CORNELIUS O'CALLAGHAN thus describes the Siege of Ballymore, by De Ginckle, and the heroic defence of this important military position by Colonel Burke:—"De Ginckle directed his march against the fort of Ballymore, the frontier post of the Irish on this side of the Shannon, and came before the place about 12 o'clock on the 7th June. The fort lay to the right of the town after which it was called, and at nearly equal distance from Mullingar and Athlone; it consisted of a little peninsula of about ten acres of land at the south-western extremity of a lough. The entrance to this peninsula was from the south by a single road along the isthmus, the traversable part of which was greatly narrowed by an extensive bog sloping off from the south-west in a north-western direction; the isthmus where there was an access to the peninsula from the continent, was crossed or guarded by a wall and ditches. The lake towards the north and north-east widened so much as to render cannon useless from thence against the peninsula, from these points it was consequently unassailable, except by soldiers in boats; and the waters of the lough on the south and the south-east, where the opposite shores of the peninsula and mainland came near to one another in a curious direction, from south-east to south-west, winded in such a manner between the two shores as to form a sort of natural but narrow fosse around the peninsula. The Irish perceiving the facilities which a body of their men would have in such a post, to harass the neighbouring English garrisons and territory, had, during the preceding winter, seized on and fortified it, and, on the approach of spring they strengthened it from Athlone with a detachment of regular troops, under Lieutenant-Colonel Burke. The garrison, including regulars and irregulars—the great majority of the former description of force amounted to 1,130 men, of whom, however, some of the irregulars were unarmed. This place was, in fact, much better suited for an outpost of annoyance in irregular war, as that for which it was originally occupied, than calculated to



stand anything like a regular siege from such a powerful army as De Ginckle's. The fortifications were by no means capable of supporting for any length of time the heavy fire of the formidable battering train which the English possessed; every part of the fort was completely overlooked, or, in military language, commanded, from an adjoining eminence; the cannon of the Irish garrison consisted of but 'two small pieces, mounted upon old cart wheels,' and, what was still worse, the stock of powder in the place was totally insufficient for a protracted defence.

"The Irish governor, however, gave the enemy's advanced parties as warm a reception as he could with his small shot and two little cannon, and refused to comply with the Dutch commander's summons to surrender. Upon this De Ginckle ordered four field pieces to be brought down and played upon the peninsula. The fire of those guns, in different directions, for three or four hours, producing no signs of submission, De Ginckle found it would be necessary to incur the trouble and delay of a formal siege, which he was most solicitous to avoid. Previous to his undertaking it was necessary to clear the adjoining country of any obstacle that might interrupt his future progress. With this view, he ordered a detachment to occupy an old castle situated about a quarter of a mile to the south-east of the fort, or peninsula, upon a height from which it was commanded. This castle was held by a small Irish outpost, consisting of a sergeant and fifteen men. The Irish sergeant, presuming to think, like his superior officer at Ballymore, that a good soldier intrusted with the defence of a place, ought not to surrender it exactly when his enemies may wish him to do so, replied to the summons of De Ginckle's detachment by a volley, which killed some of the English, for which, on the surrender of the little post, the poor fellow, on the pretext of his obstinate defence of an untenable position, was ordered by the Dutchman to be hanged for this brave discharge of his duty. After this the enemy occupied himself till about 11 o'clock at night in raising several formidable batteries mounting fourteen guns and four mortars.

"The following morning, the 8th June, at sunrise, or about half after 3 o'clock, all those batteries, consisting of four in number, commenced playing upon the fort. Towards 8 o'clock, or after about four hours' firing, De Ginckle, who from his knowledge of the place, from two prisoners taken on his march the day before, supposed that he had now done enough to subdue the stubbornness of Burke's resistance, threatened that officer with the fate of the sergeant if he would not give up the fort, and surrender the garrison as prisoners of war within two hours, adding by letter that he would grant the time to the women and children to leave the place, on the expiration of which no further opportunity of safety would be afforded to the besieged. Burke, unmoved by this personal menace, but at the same time obliged on account of



the bad state of his magazines, and in justice to so many lives under him, to listen to some treaty, demanded the most honourable terms, or those of marching out with bag and baggage, drums beating, colours flying, &c. These being refused, the gallant governor would accept of no others, and the women and children remained in the place. De Ginckle then ordered all his great guns and mortars to open upon the fort whose little works went rapidly down before the storm of cannon balls and bombshells. The Irish, amidst their falling fortification, did whatever they could with their small shot and two rudely mounted field pieces, to reply to his heavy discharge of eighteen pieces of artillery, till, after enduring such a fire for about four hours, or till 12 o'clock, their slender means of defence been rendered completely unequal to a continuation of the contest by the fall of their engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Burton, and by the deficiency or total consumption of their ammunition, they hung out a signal of surrender.

“De Ginckle, who, as a generous enemy, should have honoured the bravery of their resistance, had on the contrary the unmanly barbarity to disregard this signal, directing his batteries to continue their fire under such circumstances, or, in other words, directing his gunners to go on with a wanton destruction of brave men, offering to surrender when destitute of the means of defence, and even to prolong such artillery practice at the risk, if not to the certainty of killing and wounding a number of inoffensive women and children, whom he knew to be in the place. At last, at seven in the evening, two breaches being effected, and a body of men in four large boats to attack the peninsula in a quarter completely open, the Irish garrison hung out their black flag again. The firing (on the only side that could fire) was ordered to cease; the governor and some officers, coming out, gave up the place at about 8 o'clock, and De Ginckle, who after such conduct on his part to the Irish sergeant and garrison, is coolly styled by Storey, ‘a very merciful man,’ was graciously pleased not to hang Lieutenant-Colonel Burke for doing his duty, and was likewise so very compassionate as not to order the indiscriminate slaughter in cold blood of all the inmates of the fort, who, after the loss of forty of their number in the attack, and the departure of those who accompanied the governor, amounted to 51 officers, 780 soldiers, 60 rapparees, and nearly 400 women and children.

The English reckon their loss at about eight men, an assertion, if true, sufficiently proving how very badly the Irish garrison were supplied with the military means for a serious resistance. There were in the fort, besides the two cannons already mentioned, 430 sheep, 40 cows, 50 horses, and a quantity of oatmeal, but no powder. This last apparently trifling but important fact authenticated by Dalrymple from the MS. memoirs of Major-General Mackay, who was present at the siege, is unfairly passed over by Storey, as placing the resistance of the Irish garrison in a

true or a creditable light, by demonstrating to what an unavoidable cause their surrender was owing, and as being calculated to make a reader estimate what sort of a merciful man De Ginckle could be, who in addition to his hanging exploit already described, could prolong the discharge of eighteen pieces of cannon from 12 to 7 o'clock, against a place under the indefensible circumstances above mentioned. The officers of the garrison were removed to Dublin and kept prisoners there, but the treatment of their men was shocking, they were all shipped over to the desert Isle of Lambay, in the Sea near Dublin, where, says the conscientious and pious Lesley, their allowance for four days might, without excess, be eaten at a meal, and being thus out of the reach of their friends (all persons being prohibited to pass into it with boat or other vessel, under the penalty of forfeiting the same), they died there miserable, and in heaps. (Lesley ap., Curry, book x., chap. 19, vol. ii., p. 201)."

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#### THE LEGEND OF BALLYMORE LAKE.

THE following prize poem, written by Mr. P. Bardan, Coralstown Killucan, on reading the legend of Lough Seudy in Vol. I. of "Ancient and Modern Sketches of Westmeath," is inserted by kind permission of the gifted author:—

"When Saint Patrick came our land to bless, he journeyed up and down  
To sow the seed of righteousness in country, lane, and town;  
And few were those who did oppose the saving truths he taught,  
And countless spells and miracles his doughty saintship wrought.  
But Lucifer he tried to thrabe upon our holy Saint,  
By sending imps in reptile shape, the blessed isle to taint;  
And certain sure, those imps impure, would press him hard and sore,  
Had he not sought the hallowed spot, since known as Ballymore.

"'Twas thus, according to the book, one evening fair in May,  
Saint Patrick took his pastoral crook, on Seudy's banks to stray;  
Upon the sand along the strand, he wandered far, when lo!  
Against a stone, a stick, or bone, he struck his sacred toe.  
'Machorp,' he said, then bowed his head, to seek what made him rue,  
When from the sand his good right hand a knotty blackthorn drew;  
And couched in mystic characters a legend strange it bore,  
Which Patrick gave in Gaelic verse that day in Ballymore.

"'Dear Saint divine, from Palestine,' 'twas thus the legend ran,  
'Far under ground my way I've found, to aid you in your plan;  
On Jordan's subterranean stream no light illumed my way,  
Until I caught the solar beam on Seudy's shore to-day.  
The Celtic race is obstinate, and not inclined to change,  
What you may prize perhaps they hate, which is not very strange;  
Be not too nice, take my advice, if you would victory score,  
Let your motto be *plebotomy from Howth to Ballymore*.

“ ‘When borne down beneath the load of man’s perversity,  
 I will assist you on your road if you depend on me ;  
 If while you preach, you find your speech with Pagans won’t prevail,  
 Just bare your wrists, spit on your fists, and use me as a flail.’  
 Saint Patrick held the precept good, and wished to test its truth,  
 Hence, it is no lie, he drew the blood of many a Pagan youth,  
 Who leagued with imps, and snakes, and shrimps, endeavoured to restore,  
 By base designs, the heathen shrines destroyed in Ballymore.

“ Now glory to our noble Saint, and honour to the race,  
 That bowed their heads without complaint to his all-saving grace ;  
 And honour to his blackthorn stick, that brought conviction strong,  
 To heads that were by far too thick to know the right from wrong.  
 Our holy patron, ere he died, his sacred blackthorn took,  
 And planted it with care beside a gentle brawling brook ;  
 It rooted there, it spread elsewhere, till now from shore to shore,  
 Is seen the wand Saint Patrick’s hand first raised in Ballymore.”

END OF VOL. II.